PENTECOST DAY BY DAY

BRUCE S. WRIGHT

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Pentecost day by day

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

GOD THE GREATEST POET: MAN HIS GREATEST POEM

MOMENTS OF DEVOTION

PENTECOST DAY BY DAY

BY

BRUCE S. WRIGHT

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THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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THE DAYS

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PREFACE

THESE pages were written in one room. It was an Upper Room, both in location and dedication, literally as well as spiritually. This Upper Room is on the top (third) floor of a house whose foundations rest on the high tableland of a Pennsylvania mountain. The room has a large window which commands a wide, far view of tree-covered hills. Every morning I was up early, greeting the sun, writing until called to breakfast. Before going down to the dining room I picked out, each day, one of these devotional studies, and used it for morning family worship. The family consisted of eight people, ranging in age from a boy of twelve to the grandmother of seventy. We found that the scripture, thought and prayer gave spiritual tone and direction to the entire day. What I mean to convey is that these devotional studies have been actually tested and used in the very place where I hope they will be of great service, the home; in family as well as individual worship. I look back with joy to my Upper Room. With equal gladness I look forward to many months and years to come, praying that these pages, written in honesty and sincerity, may prove a blessing in many Upper Rooms, and lower rooms too, wherever ardent souls seek the renewal of Pentecost.

BRUCE S. WRIGHT.

PENTECOST
DAY BY DAY

FIRST DAY

DAY OF THE SPIRIT'S FOREGLEAM

Read Joel 2. 25-29

It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.—*Joel 2. 28.*

Journeying by the "Overland Flyer" from Cheyenne to Omaha, a man noticed in the seat directly in front of him a lad who was traveling alone. Much of the journey was through a dreary waste of country. The boy sat, most of the time, looking out the car window upon the barren plain. Lunch time came and the man went forward to the diner. When he returned the boy was still looking out the car window. Along toward the middle of the afternoon the man leaned forward and said, "My boy, aren't you tired?" "Not much." "But aren't you hungry?" Looking up into the man's eyes, with a wistful smile the boy said, "A little, but you see my father is going to meet me at the station." He could stand anything along the way for the joy of the meeting at the end of the journey. Joel too had been passing through a barren country. "That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten." Conditions in his beloved land were desolate. There seemed little call for anything but mourning. But a better day was to dawn. Looking through his window Joel saw the mountains already tipped with light. It was the foregleam of the new day that gave him courage as he traveled the dreary waste. Justice would be re-established. Righteousness would be restored. Faith would again occupy her rightful place. Men would "eat in plenty, and be satisfied," and "praise the name of the Lord your God." The nations would know that God was in their midst. His Spirit would be poured out upon them, upon all ages and all groups, to give them clear vision, a mind to think and a will to perform. Pentecost, anticipated by Joel, steadied his hand as the memory of it strengthens our heart.

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PRAYER

Lord of all time, we thank thee for the forward look. We are grateful that thou hast given thy people power to anticipate future days as well as recall departed years. We praise thee for hope. The hope that sees the better time across barren years. The hope that is not downcast in the face of difficulties. The hope that harvests thy love from seared and desolate fields. The hope that renews the usefulness of old men, stirs the aspirations of young men, and writes upon the brows of thy servants and handmaids the glow of thy Spirit's light. Lord, renew us with this transforming hope. In His name. Amen.

SECOND DAY

DAY OF OUR SAVIOUR'S PROMISE

Read John 14. 12–18

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever.—*John 14. 16.*

THE disciples did not want Jesus to leave them. They were building on his presence. They were counting on victory under his leadership. They were not ready for his going away, even though he went to prepare a place for them. Therefore it was a case of surprise, surprise following surprise, when immediately after telling them that he was going away, he promised them that he would send someone in his place. That one who should come in his place would be everything to them he had been. Nor need they be anxious about his leaving them, for this one who was to come would be of such a nature that he would abide with them forever. He would stand in Christ's stead, yet he would never crowd Christ out of his rightful place in their hearts. Rather he would enlarge that place. He would strengthen Christ's hold upon them, for he would speak to them always of Christ. We are grateful for the name Jesus gives the Holy Spirit, the Comforter. We do not make enough of that name and the message the very name bears. John Watson, better known as Ian MacLaren, closing his twenty-five years' pastorate in Sefton Park Church, Liverpool, said: "If I were beginning instead of closing my ministry I would be more careful about three things. I would preach shorter sermons. I would give more heed to my use of English. I would preach more comfortingly." That third resolution I am sure was divinely inspired. God's Spirit always bears the message of comfort. How much the sorrowing souls of earth need comfort! The sermon with the sentence of comfort in it will never miss-fire.

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PRAYER

Our Saviour, we are grateful to-day that thy presence with us is vouchsafed in the promised presence of the Holy Spirit. We thank thee that he is the Comforter. Not only in times of sorrow and loss does he come, but in hours of gladness and gain as well. We need both the solace and the steadying ministry of the Comforter. We dedicate our lives to the service of comfort. Forgive us our lack of sympathy, our coldheartedness. Help us to take our stand by the side of the prophet and give his message the twentieth century touch, for it meets the twentieth century need, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people!" In the name of the God of all comfort. Amen.

THIRD DAY

THE DAY OF DAYS

Read Acts 2. 1-5

When the day of Pentecost was fully come.—*Acts 2. 1.*

The day of Pentecost was not a new day. It was an old day. It had long had a place in the affectionate respect of the people. Its solemn significance brought large numbers together, from distant places, to keep the feast. Jerusalem was thronged with a heterogeneous multitude. They jostled one another in the narrow streets. They entered perfunctorily into the ceremonies incident to the occasion. Then something happened. The old day thrilled with a new meaning. The hearts of the people throbbed with an electric excitement. A new and strange element had been injected into an old and familiar custom. Steps were quickened. Countenances brightened. Eyes shone with expectant wonder. An air of subdued excitement pervaded the entire city. People turned instinctively toward a common center. Events were transpiring. The wind was in the trees and there was a stirring among the branches of the mulberries. Coming together the people saw as they had not seen before; heard as they had not heard before. They saw transformed character, lives made over, the grace of God manifested in the graces of human conduct. They heard, all of them, the gospel preached in a language they could understand. Old barriers that separated them were swept away. Misunderstandings that hitherto had kept them apart were now willing confidences that brought them together. False pride, nursed grudges, ancient animosities were transformed into humility, love and the honor that "prefers one another." Pentecost had come. The day of days had dawned. Had not Pentecost come before? Yes, many times, through succeeding generations. But never before had Pentecost come in just this way. What was the difference? Upon this occasion Pentecost was *fully* come. Only when we measure up to the fullness of an opportunity does that opportunity become fully ours. Sunday comes, as it has come from the dawn of creation, but only when it fully comes does one get from the Lord's day all that it has to give. The obligation rests not upon the day, but upon the people. Pentecost still lives. The day will become the day of days to every person in whose experience it has right of way, to whom it fully comes.

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PRAYER

Everlasting God, whose promises are the same to all mankind and to every generation, we thank thee that the common day may become uncommon through our attitude toward it. So we would think of Pentecost, the day of days, fully come, because the people brought to it fullness of surrender, consecration with no reserve. So thou wilt transform our lives, empower our efforts, glorify thy church when we, thy people, fully meet thy time with our determination. Help us so to act. In Jesus' name. Amen.

FOURTH DAY

A PENTECOSTAL QUESTION ANSWERED

Read Acts 2. 37-40

They were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.—*Acts 2. 37, 38.*

Different occasions arouse different questions. In summer, at a country club, in the height of the golf season, one hears questions about shots, scores, greens, hazards and holes. At a world series baseball game, last half of the ninth inning, score a tie, one does not bother his neighbor with questions about the stock market. Nor at a diplomatic dinner is one apt to hear questions about the most recent kindergarten methods. Questions should, and usually do, have an appropriateness to the occasion which prompts them. A truly religious gathering will inspire inquiries regarding religious matters. A spiritual atmosphere generates spiritual thoughts. Men dead-in-earnest reveal their earnestness by the questions they raise and the themes for conversation they suggest. It is not to be wondered at that the people in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost seemed fairly beside themselves with the seriousness of their situation. How could they be otherwise when the assembly took the deep spiritual tone it did! "What shall we do?" They were moved to do something. This is the mark of a true revival. It moves men to do something. Not for reasons that are trumped up, nor because of an atmosphere that is worked up, but because the Holy Spirit moves with conviction in the hearts of the people. What was it that led me to ask this same question when, as a lad, in meetings conducted by my own pastor, I "went forward"? The Holy Spirit. Pentecost does not raise a question, then refuse an answer. The answer is as clear as the question is honest. "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." That is not the end. It is but the beginning of a rich and constant experience. The same Holy Spirit who stirred you up will be given you, "without money and without price," your daily guide and help.

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PRAYER

Gracious Father, we thank thee for the moving air of a truly spiritual gathering. We are grateful that questions are raised, that a healthy curiosity and a stirring conviction result from all properly atmosphered meetings. We pray that thou wilt save us from the perfunctoriness of worship. May we leave room for the free play of thy Holy Spirit. When men are moved and they ask questions, when they "speak out in meeting," may we not be surprised. May we have an answer ready. Let us enter every service with a divine expectancy, looking for the great question, eager to give the one answer! In Jesus' name. Amen.

FIFTH DAY

SINNING AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT

Read Matthew 12. 30-33

All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.—*Matthew 12. 31.*

In the little mountain town in which I often spend a part of my summers, on my way home from the midweek service on a recent Thursday evening, my companion was a man I have known many years. A successful Y. M. C. A. secretary in Canada and the United States, later a business man, he has always been a loyal churchman and an earnest student of the Bible. The question of the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit was uppermost in my mind as we walked along. Turning to my friend I inquired, "What do you understand is the sin against the Holy Spirit?" Without pausing to ponder or fashion his sentences, for evidently he had thought the matter through many times, he replied, "I have always understood the sin against the Holy Spirit to be the determined and persistent resistance to the Spirit's pleading. We can continue to resist God's Spirit so long that the time will come when the Spirit's voice falls on deaf ears." Continuing he said, "I recall an experience of my youth. I attended a meeting with a number of young people in our little country church. Among others a white-haired man stood to give his testimony. He pled with the young people not to resist the Holy Spirit. He told of his own experience when the Spirit called repeatedly, but he did not listen. Finally the day came when he lost all sense of the Spirit's pleadings. With that went also the joy and hope, and the ardent desire of the Christian experience." My friend's words, substantiated by the old man's testimony, so clearly stated my own judgment of the question that I here set them down as an answer to the question, "What is the sin against the Holy Spirit?" We are all aware that no definite sin is named in the context. It is not defined as are the sins outlined in the Ten Commandments. But there is a sin against the Holy Spirit, and the feeling of Bible students, as well as the testimony of Christian experience generally, is that the continued refusal to heed the Spirit's pleading constitutes the blasphemy of blasphemies.

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PRAYER

Spirit Divine, tender, loving, constant, we would hear thy voice and heed thy call. Thou hast spoken to us, often, words of wisdom and thoughtfulness, and when we have listened we have rejoiced with joy unspeakable. When we refuse to hear and heed then are we sorrowful. Here and now we consecrate ourselves to thee, that we may not make the great refusal nor enter into blasphemy. Hear and help us, through Christ our Saviour. Amen.

SIXTH DAY

SPIRITUAL STATISTICS

Read Acts 2. 41-45

The same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.—*Acts 2. 41.*

STATISTICS are of value or they would not have been given in connection with the first Pentecost. The necessary emphasis here, as in every similar case, is to maintain a proper balance. Not to attach too great importance to statistics, nor too little. Not to say, "See these figures; they tell the whole story." Nor yet to dismiss the figures with curt finality, "They are only statistics; they mean nothing." Some men treasure statistics; others burn them. Some have sincere reverence for them; others scant respect. I confess that I have a flair for statistics. I love those pages in the Minutes and Reports given over entirely to the numerical summing up of the task. Now, that is exactly what spiritual statistics should be, a *numerical* summing up of the task. But let us not forget that it is only numerical. When one church reports an annual addition of two hundred and sixty-eight members and another church an addition of fourteen members, one must see more than those figures to know which is the greater spiritual victory. The former church may be in a growing residential section, the latter in a difficult downtown field. Doubtless they are both great spiritual victories. One must know more than the mere fact that one church gave fifteen thousand dollars to missions, and another gave three hundred, before he can pass upon the spiritual quality of those dollars. One may be a rich Corinthian church, the other a poor Macedonian church. Spiritual statistics are honest, they are never padded. They are given as a report of work done, not to create an effect. They are given lovingly, never boastingly. They are given simply, in a straightforward manner; never with dots and dashes and eloquent flourishes. The perfect example of spiritual statistics is found in the Minutes of Pentecost, "There were added unto them about three thousand souls."

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PRAYER

Our Father, thou art the God of order. We learn from thy Word of the value of records. Thou hast taught us sincerity of speech, accuracy of account. Help us to be honest when we tell of our work. Help us ever to be mindful of the souls behind all statistics. May Pentecost mean to us three thousand *souls* added to the church. When we read of a church of two thousand members may we think of them as two thousand *souls*. Beyond our generous gifts of multiplied dollars may we see the souls to whom those dollars shall minister. Father, free us from the shackles of statistics for statistics' sake, through Christ who loved souls supremely. Amen.

SEVENTH DAY

THE SPIRIT'S IMPRINT—STEADFASTNESS

Read 1 Corinthians 15. 53–58

They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship.—*Acts 2. 42.*

THREE thousand souls converted, and they continued steadfast. That is worth noting. Not all who start finish. Not all who put the hand to the plow go through to the end of the furrow. So many grow weary. So many look longingly back. Christian character has no surer evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit than the imprint of steadfastness. By this quality shall men know that Pentecost has come. I vividly recall a man in my first church. That was before I went to college, before I was old enough to vote. I was only a local preacher, supplying a church in a little lumber town in Pennsylvania. It was a Union Church, though the pulpit was always supplied by appointment through the Erie Conference. The pillar of that church was a man forty years my senior, a man of some travel, of wide reading, a prosperous lumberman. How he ever stood my green, amateurish efforts at preaching and pastoral work I do not know. But he did. He was there in his pew every Sunday, rain or shine, winter and summer, unless ill or absent from home. He stands in my life as the personification of steadfastness. I bless his memory. He had experienced the Holy Spirit. Pentecost had put its imprint upon his life. The steadfast life averages well. It may not be the life of brilliant genius; it is the life of beautiful plodding. It may not attract by spectacular fireworks of the sky; it does warm with a steady flame. It may not win in the hundred yard dash; it will reach the goal at the end of the grueling Marathon. The steadfast life does not give up. It presses forward, through every experience, over every barrier. The steadfast life is the life of dreams and deeds. Dreams are not to be discarded, but they must be translated into deeds. I seek for myself no spectacular ministry; for my church no striking but superficial success; for you no easily obtained but shallow experience. I covet for all and for the church the quality that accompanies God's Spirit, the imprint that marks every true Pentecost—steadfastness.

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PRAYER

Lord of life, we thank thee that thou art the finisher as well as the author of our faith. Thou who didst set thy face steadfastly toward Jerusalem, help us that we may not give up when we confront difficulty. We would know that the Christian life is a long, hard pull, and that only they who endure unto the end receive the crown. We pray that our membership in the church may be more than a name upon the roll, may it be a synonym for the Spirit's imprint—steadfastness. Through Christ our Saviour. Amen.

EIGHTH DAY

PENTECOST AND THE OPEN CHURCH

Read Psalm 84

Continuing daily with one accord in the temple.—*Acts 2. 46.*

If I were to formulate a creed about the church building I would begin, "I believe in the open church." I believe in the beautiful church, the well-planned, well-built church. I believe in the church that looks like a church, that a stranger will not mistake for a library, town hall, gymnasium or auditorium. I believe in the church that architecturally bears the ecclesiastical mark. I believe in the well-kept church, within and without. All these items, and others, would be incorporated in my creed about the church building, but it would begin with a declaration for the open church. Evangelicals as well as ritualists love to enter the church at other times than the exact hours of stated worship. I would not take anything in exchange for the recollection that the church of my boyhood was a church I could enter any time. I did enter any time. Often, passing that church on my way home from my long paper route, I stepped within. It may not have been for the stated act of formal worship (I was a normal lad), but I entered with respect, and the atmosphere of that holy place never failed to impress my youthful mind. I have traveled far since then, and I have met with no greater joy or helpfulness to my spirit than to find, in small town as well as teeming city, the open church, with an invitation to enter. And no greater disappointment than to find church after church tightly closed, grim and uninviting. The argument for the open church is human need. Men need the holy place, the dearly loved house of prayer, which they may enter at will, there to find renewal of courage and strength. The example for the open church is Pentecostal. The custom of having the great churches along the beautiful avenues of our metropolitan cities open certain hours of every day is by no means modern. The church beginning at Pentecost was an open church, the disciples of the first century going in and out, praising and serving their God.

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PRAYER

Our wise and far-seeing Father, founder of the visible church, we recognize that these temples made with hands are not eternal. They must crumble and decay. But the Presence that abides within is eternal. Here in our temporal temples we become aware of the eternal Spirit. Father, we love the church, the house of prayer, the house of friendly fellowship, the house of comforting grace. We would keep the doors of thy house ever open, that thy needy children, passing, may enter and find thee. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

NINTH DAY

PENTECOSTAL (PASTORAL) CALLING

Read Psalm 122

Breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people.—*Acts 2. 46, 47.*

This verse concerns pastors and parish visitors chiefly, but not solely. Some of the most effective calling done is carried on by laymen and laywomen. "From house to house." Does this mean that not a house should be skipped, that one should stop at every house, no matter who lives there? There are times when that may well be the rule. When a community is taking a religious census, then let every house be visited. If agents, sent out by aggressive business concerns, have instructions to stop at every door, should the business of the Kingdom be less thorough? The commercial agent stops to sell, the church caller to save. The first emphasis of all Pentecostal calling is thoroughness. Let pastors and congregations err on the side of enthusiasm rather than on the side of neglect! Better overstep, by calling on someone already spiritually provided for, than failing to call where there may be spiritual longing and need. Another point in Pentecostal calling is that it should be systematic. So much calling is spasmodic. A pastor neglects calling for an extended period, then suddenly realizes that he should call and starts in vigorously to make up for lost time. Or a congregation is aroused to the fact that they are smug, selfish and satisfied in their fellowship life, and they begin immediately a calling campaign. It flourishes for a time, then dies a slow and painless death. The pastor, at least, should carefully plan and faithfully continue his calling. It is as much his ordained task to call regularly as it is to preach at stated intervals. "A house-going minister," said Chalmers, "makes a church-going people." One of the greatest preachers and best pastors of the last hundred years in America was Theodore L. Cuyler of Brooklyn. He made it a rule of his ministry never to let a day come to a close without having made at least one pastoral call. For that very reason his great church grew with Pentecostal rapidity and stability. The Holy Spirit honored his work.

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PRAYER

Lord, thou art the Good Shepherd. As a true shepherd tends his flock, caring for each individual sheep, so we would shepherd the members of our congregations. Give us all, we pray, pastors and lay visitors, the shepherding instinct. We thank thee to-day not only for the spiritual rewards of house-to-house visiting, but for the material joy such work brings. "Breaking bread" together; eating our "meat with gladness and singleness of heart," we find ourselves united by a common experience. Pentecost honors our day-by-day toil, for which we give thee thanks. Amen.

TENTH DAY

THE SPIRIT'S SENSITIVENESS

Read Ephesians 4. 25-32

Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.—*Ephesians 4. 30.*

IMMEDIATELY one thinks of children who grieve the hearts of their parents. There are multitudes of fathers and mothers whose hearts are all but broken because of wayward children. Children who have denied the faith in which they were instructed, who have drifted far, having cut the anchor rope of a clear Christian example given them. But one does not have to be a "wandering boy" or girl to grieve the heart of a parent. One may grieve another by falling short of the best. By being content with a passing mark when none but the highest mark possible to his ability should satisfy him. One grieves another when he follows the good although the best is available. Grief comes in on the shoulders of half-hearted effort, poor and bungling workmanship, falling short of the ideal, doing less than one's talents clearly indicate he should do. The heart of parenthood and true friendship is exceedingly sensitive. Like the photographer's plate, every light and shadow, every speck and flaw as well as every touch of beauty or hint of perfection is revealed by the sensitive film. The higher one climbs in the realm of life and experience, the more delicate are the materials with which he deals, the more sensitive becomes the quality of sensitiveness. Our hearts are pained with sin; how much more poignant the pain in the Saviour's heart! We have a becoming human sympathy for sorrow, suffering, tears, loss, hunger, poverty and loneliness; how infinitely tender the divine sympathy of our Lord who "in all their affliction he was afflicted"! Man's spirit is sensitive to the frailties and disappointments of his experience; how much more sensitive God's Spirit. The Holy Spirit knows the meaning of tears, is not unacquainted with heartache and heart-break, knows what it is to pass sleepless nights in anxious waiting for tidings that do not come. Therefore grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.

—o—

PRAYER

Our Father, we thank thee that thou hast created us with hearts of tenderness as well as bodies of strength. Thou hast so constituted us that we are immediately sensitive to loss and gain, tears and laughter. Many experiences of the years have brought us rejoicing. Alas, many others have caused us sorrow. And now we confess that we have done those things we ought not to have done, we have left undone those things we ought to have done, we have grieved thy Holy Spirit. Forgive us, we pray. Reinstate us and reinspire us with purpose to daily bring joy, not sorrow, to thy Holy Spirit. In Christ's name. Amen.

ELEVENTH DAY

MARKS OF THE KINGDOM

Read Romans 14. 16-22

The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.—*Romans 14. 17.*

THE kingdoms of earth are built very largely upon meat and drink; the kingdom of God is built of more enduring materials. The kingdoms of earth have an acknowledged rightful place; the kingdom of God an indisputably necessary place. The kingdoms of earth are readily distinguishable from the kingdom of God. We must eat and drink—the kingdoms of earth recognize that; there is also nourishment for the soul—the kingdom of God supplies that. One finds pleasure in the kingdoms of earth; joy rewards the searcher in the kingdom of God. One is able to tell the kingdoms of earth by certain marks; likewise the kingdom of God is known by indelible qualities. I am writing these lines in a house, in which I am visiting as a guest, upon which has recently been expended a considerable amount of money simply for a chimney and a fireplace. In the kingdom of houses one of the marks of an attractive, warm, hospitable house is a fireplace. Like the kingdom of houses the kingdom of God has marks. They are just as real as the mark of the fireplace, and no less inviting and winsome. The marks of the Kingdom are three in particular. First, righteousness. The kingdoms of excitement, adventure, reading, pleasure *may* exist without righteousness; the kingdom of God cannot. The prime requisite in the realm that demands of one the last ounce of strength and his unflagging devotion is righteousness. Second, there is peace. The kingdom of God is opposed to war. War means hatred, bloodshed, plunder, rapine, murder; therefore the mark of the Kingdom is peace. Third, joy in the Holy Spirit. How does joy in the Holy Spirit differ from any other joy? It is clean, pure, wholesome, unselfish, loving. Joy in the Holy Spirit leaves no aftermath of regret, no body of pain, no trail of injuries. Joy in the Holy Spirit is the consummate happiness experienced by having the Divine Presence in all human endeavors.

—o—

Prayer

Our God and Father, there are many marks we wear; there is one we supremely desire. Uniforms, badges, pins, buttons distinguish us men as members of various kingdoms of earth; kingdoms of fraternities, lodges, clubs. We thank thee for all good organizations whose insignia we are proud to wear. But we are especially grateful for the vast unseen kingdom of God, whose evidence is intangible but real. Help us that we, like thy servant Paul, may "bear" in our body "the marks of the Lord Jesus." Give us above all a happy experience, a glad Christian countenance, joy in the Holy Spirit. Amen.

TWELFTH DAY

POWER UNPURCHASABLE

Read Acts 8. 14-20

When Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. —*Acts 8. 18, 19.*

Simon is not the only one who has mistaken the power of money. He erred, as have multitudes of others, and was swept off his feet by the illusion that money can do anything. Money can do many things. Likewise there are many things money cannot do. Money can build a house, but it cannot build a home. Money can send a young man to school—it cannot give him an education. Money may have considerable to do with electing a man to office—it cannot fill the office; only the man himself, and his sheer ability, can do that. Money can create an orchestra, but it cannot write a captivating orchestral score. Money can purchase a beautiful canvas—it cannot reproduce the picture; only the artist can do that. "Money talks," but its speech is far from eloquent or convincing. Like Simon, we too are bewitched with the fancied power of money. But after we have tried money or seen it tried we know how weak and apologetic it is. Money stands impotent before the essential values of life. Love, faith, hope, integrity, brains, talent, genius, character, and even dogged persistence represent values which cannot be estimated in terms of dollars;

they are unpurchasable. Sometimes, like Simon, men imagine they can buy their way to power, position or fame. A preacher fancies that much space in the daily press means fame. It never does. It may bring notoriety, but not fame. Fame is a tested quality that must pass through the fierce furnace of the years before it can be pronounced pure gold. Power is purchasable, but not by the medium of money. It is bought with the specie of sacrifice, study, endeavor, toil, patience, surrender to the highest and best. The Holy Spirit means power along every avenue of activity. Pentecostal power is free to him whose mind is fully open to the Spirit of God.

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PRAYER

Our Father, thou art the owner of power illimitable. Thou, too, art the very embodiment of integrity. Thou canst not be bribed. Thou hast power for every human activity; power for the preacher and teacher, physician and healer, homemaker and artisan, student and toiler. Thou art releasing thy power, not for filthy lucre, but for faithful endeavor. Give us, we pray, thy Holy Spirit, not for money, but for might, to perform thy work in the world. In the name of Christ, our Lord. Amen.

THIRTEENTH DAY

SPIRIT-INSPIRED SPEECH

Read Luke 12. 6–12

The Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.—*Luke 12. 12.*

WANDERING one day about the streets of old London I found, not far from the London bridge, an old church tucked away behind some shops. A paved court, between two stores, led to the church doors. They were open, as Church of England doors are nearly all open, and I found welcome entrance to a small but beautiful Gothic place of worship. In the entry, in a prominent place, was the record that it was to that church that John Wesley came to preach toward the close of his life. On that occasion he prefaced his sermon with the recital of the incident that many years before, at the beginning of his ministry, he had come to that very church to preach, gone up into the pulpit, and discovered to his dismay that he had forgotten his manuscript. In consternation he returned to the vestry. There he was met by a good old Christian woman who, seeing his agitation, inquired the cause. "I have forgotten my sermon manuscript," he replied. "Go back into the pulpit," she said. "Trust the grace of God to give you words." "I went into the pulpit," said Wesley, "and preached that day with such freedom and power that I have not used a manuscript since." Now this is not a conclusive argument for the abandonment of the manuscript when preaching. Some of the greatest preachers in the history of preaching have used manuscript in the pulpit. Every preacher should be a law unto himself in the method he follows. Wesley's experience, no doubt providential, led him to the discovery of the method that made *his* preaching most effective. Nor is this verse meant to excuse the neglectful preacher or careless Sunday-school teacher in the faulty, ragged preparation of sermon or lesson. The Holy Spirit honors industry, not indolence. This verse clearly teaches that the Holy Spirit enables one in emergencies. The Holy Spirit does not help where man has failed; he helps where man has trusted. The Holy Spirit is the promised helper not only of the preacher, but of every one who testifies. Whoever honestly endeavors to witness for Christ finds the Holy Spirit his unfailing assistant.

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PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we thank thee for the promised help of thy Holy Spirit. He is by the side of the preacher who does honest work in the preparation of his message. He goes with that preacher into his pulpit. He gives power to his words, and in the emergency he gives the words themselves. All this we steadfastly believe. Help us, we pray, that we may prepare our testimony to the limit of our ability, then trust thy Holy Spirit to the utmost of abandonment. In Jesus' name. Amen.

FOURTEENTH DAY

OUR SPIRITUAL NIAGARA

Read Zechariah 4. 1-6

Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.—*Zechariah 4. 6.*

DIFFERENT individuals see different things in Niagara. The artist sees a picture. The poet, inspiration for his pen. The musician, soaring notes. The stunt-seeker, chance for a new thriller, walking a tight-rope across the gorge or going over the falls in a rubber ball. The hotel manager and shopkeeper see in Niagara a magnet to draw for their trade tourists by the hundreds of thousands. The engineer sees potential power. He, with the permission of the Canadian and United States governments, has harnessed mighty Niagara for power. The spiritual engineer, pastor, missionary, Sunday-school teacher, earnest laymen and laywomen, loving their church, see in Niagara a suggestion of the vast resources of spiritual power available for the work of Christ in the world. What must have been the amazement, the thrilling surprise, to the first person, white man or Indian, who looked upon Niagara Falls! Floating down the river in a canoe, or wending his way overland through the deep forest, he first heard the roar of the tumbling waters, then saw the rising mist with the rainbow which the shining sun forever arches the falls, then the great wall of falling water! A similar thrill must have been the experience of Zechariah, one of the first men to discover the secret of spiritual power. I do not know whether he came upon the secret suddenly. Probably not. He toiled in the wilderness, groping his way through the dark. He hoped to find something that would put courage into the hearts of the people. When he found it he announced to mankind, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord." As Niagara holds electrical power beyond the ability of man to estimate, so Pentecost holds spiritual possibilities beyond the most daring dream of the most imaginative disciple. "The final forces of society are always the spiritual forces," says Charles R. Brown. Why do we not seek in the beginning that to which we must come finally? If the final forces of society are spiritual, are not also the initial forces? Let us lay our foundations as well as crown our structure in the confidence which we place, not in might, nor power, but in the living Spirit.

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PRAYER

Gracious Father, who hast not left us weaponless in a wicked world, nor tear-stained in the midst of sorrow, give us confidence in the practicability of all spiritual forces. Help us to see, at the outset of every high endeavor, that might is not always mighty, nor power powerful; that thy Holy Spirit alone can make effective earth's boastful strength. Give us thy Spirit. Open our eyes that we may see Pentecost as vividly as Niagara, and believe in it as ardently. For thy kingdom's sake. Amen.

FIFTEENTH DAY

THE PRAYER HELPER

Read Romans 8. 22-28

The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.—*Romans 8. 26.*

The point at which many of us need the most help is prayer. We believe in prayer, but we do not practice it. Such prayers as we do use are stereotyped. They vary little from day to day, or year to year. The freshness of prayer does not seem to appeal to us. Each day brings us new needs, fresh contacts, hitherto unknown opportunities. All of these should be a subject for prayer. They should find their ready place in vital communion with God. Prayer is largely a matter of taking time. He who takes time for prayer will learn the secret of prayer and experience the power of prayer. A man who knows says that "the person who spends five minutes a day in the Upper Room, in the course of a year, will be an entirely different person." Of course one must enter the prayer life not as an experiment, but as an experience. It is not something he is going to try—it is something he is going to do. In this place of greatest need the Christian has a helper. The Holy Spirit is promised to help us in prayer. If we are weak and infirm the Spirit enters to impart strength. If we are in a quandary concerning the things for which we ought to pray, the Holy Spirit gives guidance. The Spirit even prays for us in the emergencies of life. How can that be? My human spirit yearns for another whom I love; will not the Holy Spirit do the same for those whom he loves? The Holy Spirit teaches us that *all things* are proper subjects for prayer.

At Williamsville, New York, there is a Home for Children, under the direction of the Methodist Episcopal Church. A few weeks ago a man came into the office of Superintendent Witham in Buffalo and inquired, "What is your most pressing present need at the Home?" After a moment's thought the Superintendent replied, "An Administration Cottage." The man said, "I am prepared to give such a building at an expense of not more than seventy-five thousand dollars." The Superintendent was not as amazed as one would imagine, for he had been praying for the needs of the Home. The benefactor's answer to the question, "What led you to do this?" was, "The Spirit of God." The Holy Spirit is the daily helper in the conduct of the Children's Home.

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PRAYER

Our Father, we confess our failure in prayer. It is not that we do not have faith in prayer, but we fail to practice it. Send thy Holy Spirit to help our infirmities. Our infirmities include time; we do not take time to pray. They are physical; we do not give enough strength to prayer because we lavish it upon things of lesser importance. Enlighten our minds that we may know what we should pray for as we ought. Impress upon our hearts the value of intercession, even of groanings that cannot be uttered. Amen.

SIXTEENTH DAY

THE SPIRIT'S ANOINTING

Read Luke 4. 16-21

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted.—*Luke 4. 18.*

On High Holborn, London, stands the Parish Church of Saint Andrew. For more than one thousand years a church of some sort has stood on that very spot. The first structure was of logs. Other buildings followed, more pretentious, until the present temple, one of Sir Christopher Wren's noblest churches. It is rich in memorials. The one that interested me most was a large, artistically wrought tablet in appreciation of William Mundane, M.D. In 1823, when a medical student, he saw an accident in the street, in which a girl was seriously injured. He went to her aid, took her to a hospital, but having no ticket of admission from a hospital governor, was turned away. Hurriedly trying other hospitals he was treated in the same way. Finally he was compelled to leave the poor girl at a rooming house where she died two or three days later. He was so stirred by this experience that he resolved that some day he would do something to remedy such a situation. He never forgot that vow. As a result free admissions to hospitals were brought about. He himself established a free hospital where the only ticket of admission required is need and suffering. That is exactly as Christ would have it. For this purpose, among others, the Spirit anointed him. It is a glorious list, bringing the gospel to the poor, healing the brokenhearted, preaching deliverance to the captives, causing the blind to see, setting at liberty them that are bruised, proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord. For these high purposes the Holy Spirit anoints all true followers of Christ. Preachers and teachers, physicians and surgeons, nurses and students, wage-earners and home-makers, disciples all are anointed by the Spirit to carry on the Master's work in the world. The Holy Spirit authorizes only one question of those who knock at our door, "Have you need?" To give an answer to that question we have the Holy Spirit's special anointing.

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PRAYER

My Father, forgive me that I am so easily turned aside from my particular work. Social allurements, club ease, luncheon fellowships, forming contacts, giving the glad hand, superficial friendships, seeking words, polishing the sentences of my address, scattered interests, these and many other things have taken me from my main work, have minimized my influence and robbed me of power. I resolve to stick more closely to the task of the Holy Spirit's anointing. Send Pentecost to my soul, I pray, that I may not fail. In his name. Amen.

SEVENTEENTH DAY

FALSE ACCUSATIONS

Read Acts 2. 6-13

Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.—*Acts 2. 13.*

A CASUAL inquiry became a false statement. A mild interest developed into a direct charge. The idle question, "What means this?" grew until it bore fruit in the offensive slander, "They are drunk." Doubtless those upon whom the Holy Spirit descended acted strangely to the curious multitude. The interpretation of honest faith is often queer to the casual onlooker. The man of the world sees little good in the church, or in those who attend, and hurls his false accusations at both the church and the worshipers. "Church members are mostly hypocrites." Who has not heard that! He who lacks the spirit of honest conviction denies it in every one else. "They are in it for what they can get out of it," is another frequently heard charge. They whose deeds are never actuated by selflessness are able to see nothing but selfishness in the actions of every one else. "He is preaching because it pays," the preacher-hater hurls at the prophet. He who has never felt the urgency to do one thing, no matter what it costs, can see nothing but avarice in everything a man does. "The missionary is a meddler," charges the exploiter of backward peoples. He who is out to despoil whole races in the name of the god of profit seeks to cover his own insatiable greed for gold by a false accusation against the one who interferes with his voracious tendencies. Many a man who has made false accusations has lived to regret them. But regret does not atone for the harm done by statements which have undermined faith. Faith, especially in youth, is a very delicate thing and may be easily crushed. A young woman came to her pastor with the request that he give her some material that would equip her to meet the arguments of a college student who had become enamored of atheistic views. He told her to trust experience, to have confidence in both heart and head. One should not be disturbed by the unripened views of those who have opinions but not convictions; who cannot speak with authority because they have not lived life to the full. Maturity and experience do not make thoughtless assaults upon faith. Most false accusations against Christianity are made, not from the heights of knowledge, but from the depths of ignorance. When one, by the visitation of Pentecost to his soul, gets on the inside of religious experience, he knows its reality and truth.

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PRAYER

Heavenly Father, I thank thee that there is something about the Divine Spirit in life that makes life different. I pray that I may not be afraid of being accounted queer because of my faith. May I be willing to be, if necessary, even a fool "for Christ's sake." May I not shrink from doing my full duty because of what men may say. Give me thy Holy Spirit of daring, that cares altogether for the validity of the experience and not at all for the accusations of men. Amen.

EIGHTEENTH DAY

KNIGHTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Read Isaiah 42. 1-7

> Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him.—*Isaiah 42. 1.*

DUBBED a knight, not by the sword-tip upon the shoulder, but by the Spirit's touch upon the heart. Knighthood is still in flower. The spirit of the knight is not dead. Commander George M. Dyott, recruiting a rescuing party to penetrate the jungles of Brazil, hoping to find traces of an expedition lost to civilization, called for a volunteer to complete his quota. He wanted a man willing to undergo hard labor in the stifling tropical jungle; ready to face attacks by Indians and possible torture; a man unafraid of the perils of tropical fever. Furthermore he stipulated that he wanted a man to "whom money, the comforts of life, and life itself meant very little." He offered no special inducements of extra pay. Commander Dyott expected a few men would reply, but he was entirely unprepared for the flood of applications that poured in upon him, begging the privilege to join the rescuing party. It was more than the urge of adventure that prompted their eagerness to go, it was the spirit of true courage and service. God touches men and women with his Holy Spirit, so that they willingly offer themselves; they go out, daring the impossible, all in the name of Christ, to rescue the lost. *The lost* is not a cant phrase. Men are lost to the privileges of the Christian life, to faith, hope and love. Lost in the jungles of hate and greed, coveteousness and selfishness; lost in the fever-breeding swamps of a self-centered philosophy of life and an unbridled license of conduct. Knights of the Holy Spirit to the rescue! Calling the roll one may well begin with the Westminster Abbey of the Bible, the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. But we must not stop there. Every generation has been blessed with the service of brave souls. To-day the Knights of the Holy Spirit unfalteringly pursue their work of rescue in every land. We too are summoned to enroll under their banner.

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PRAYER

Strong Son of God, let the Holy Spirit that fell upon thee be our mantle! Teach us, we pray, that we may be drilled in the knightliness of service, schooled in the tactics of rescue, proficient in the militarism of love. May we be familiar with the manual of sacrifice, willing to go anywhere, ready to do anything, with an ear ever sensitive to the Spirit's least command. Above all, may we prove ourselves true Knights of the Holy Spirit in the unadventurous realm of humdrum activities to which most of us are called. In thy name who crowned the disagreeable and even death itself with knightly winsomeness. Amen.

NINETEENTH DAY

TEACHER OF TEACHERS

Read John 14. 25-31

> But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things. —*John 14. 26.*

ONE of the most delightful books upon my shelves is a book by that commanding author, H. G. Wells. The title is *The Story of a Great Schoolmaster.* The book makes inspiring as well as delightful reading. I take it down, on blue days, for the encouragement it gives. At the very outset the author confesses that in his long and varied experience this is the only life that has ever stirred him to biographical effort. Oundle School, which constituted the material of Sanderson's lifework, is a very old school for boys, having been established in 1485. When Sanderson was called to the headmastership the school was pretty much run down, in every sense of the word. The buildings were few in number, old and sadly in need of repair. The discipline of the school was bad, its general reputation none too good. At thirty-five this intensely human man, this man possessing purpose, vision, imagination, together with the fine art of living and working with boys, took over what was really nothing more than a country grammar school and transformed it into a center of scholarship and character. He made Oundle what it now is because he literally taught all things, from the alphabet to God. The picture of Sanderson, as his biographer draws it, whose life was not long and whose power was limited, faintly suggests the universal and timeless teachership of the Holy Spirit. "He shall teach you all things," is the promise. One need not hesitate to take anything to God in prayer. Guidance through any situation is available. Of course, being taught by the Holy Spirit presupposes a willingness to be taught. One's life must be surrendered to the call and command of the Divine Spirit. If one is not taught by the Holy Spirit it is not so much lack of ability as lack of willingness. He who is willing to be taught by the Teacher of teachers will find the way open. Under the tutelage of the Holy Spirit he will find his mind tuned to new and hitherto unknown evidences of divine guidance. The teacher occupies an important place in our scheme of things. Whether in the day school or Sunday school, whether as parent, friend or adviser, the teacher holds a place of high honor. The teaching quality of the Divine Spirit is a quality so vital that the importance of it all can only be hinted at in the phrase, Teacher of teachers.

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PRAYER

Father, we thank thee for the remembrance of all good teachers. For their helpful, abiding influence we are grateful. For the Teacher, the Holy Spirit, we praise thee. We rejoice that he comes into our lives at every point of need, giving comfort, assurance, direction. Help us to yield ourselves more fully to his guidance. Forgive us for having grieved the Teacher. Help us, from this hour, to obey the Spirit's voice. Amen.

TWENTIETH DAY

WE CANNOT ESCAPE HIM

Read Psalm 139. 1-12

Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?—*Psalm 139. 7.*

The Psalmist follows this searching question with a series of statements outlining distant places, inaccessible some of them, to which, had he the power, he might go to escape the Spirit of God. But he concludes, almost before he begins, that the most undreamed-of places in heaven or hell, earth, sea or sky are soon sought out by God's Spirit. Such is the Holy Spirit, everywhere present, filling human experience as the ascending sun fills the earth. I once saw the sun from the top of the world. It was in the Philippines, on Mount Santo Tomas, northern Luzon. We started early one morning and toiled, with the aid of mountain ponies, all one day, up steep, rocky paths, winding perilously near the edge of a deep precipice, until, at evening, with one final steep ascent, we reached the top. That night we slept under heavy blankets in a little log cabin built on the very peak of the mountain. We were up early the next morning to see the sunrise. Right out of the waters of the Pacific the sun seemed to come, flooding our mountain top and distant peaks with a flaming tropical light. Climbing higher the sun chased the darkness from the valleys, then crept in among the trees growing so thickly down the mountain slopes. In a few moments from the time we took our stand in dense darkness there on the mountain peak "the world rolled into light, it was daybreak everywhere." I thought of the Psalmist, wondering if he could escape God's Spirit, and the inevitable conclusion, "The darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee." The Holy Spirit, whom the Psalmist could not flee, who moved among the multitudes at Pentecost, still searches the hearts of men. We cannot escape him.

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PRAYER

Almighty God, everywhere present through the penetrating power of thy Holy Spirit, we cannot escape thee, we would not escape thee. If even "our sins will find us out," surely thy Spirit will search us out and return us to thee. Father, we have traveled far, but wherever we have gone we have found thy Spirit. Thou art geographically victorious. America, Europe, Orient, Islands of the Sea, thy Spirit has greeted and helped us in every journey we have taken, in every experience we have had. To-day we give sincere praise for thy Holy Spirit whose penetrating, beneficent presence we cannot escape. Amen.

TWENTY-FIRST DAY

WE CANNOT DO WITHOUT HIM

Read Psalm 51. 1–13

Take not thy holy spirit from me.—*Psalm 51. 11.*

What did the Psalmist know about the Holy Spirit? He lived centuries before Pentecost. Yes, but God's Spirit was present in the world as truly then as at any other time. The Psalmist knew the Holy Spirit. He was acquainted with the work of the Holy Spirit and knew the joy of his indwelling presence. He makes many requests in this searching prayer. He prays that God will hide his face from his sins and blot out all his iniquities; that he will create in him a clean heart and renew a right spirit within him; that he will restore unto him the joy of his salvation and uphold him with his free spirit; that he will not cast him away from his presence nor take his Holy Spirit from him. He feels that he *must* have God's Spirit, that he cannot do without him. We say that one can become accustomed to any loss, that in time one will be able to get along without many of the people and comforts, dearly beloved and familiar through many years. I wonder! Can life ever be the same after the loss of certain things, following the passing of some friends? I go back to my college, as you return to yours, and find a few things unchanged. But most things have been radically altered. Many new buildings have sprung up. An entirely new faculty, with two or three exceptions, has come in. We go back, with such buoyancy, eager to see the faces and clasp the hands of dear classmates we have not seen for years. They are not there. Does the Holy Spirit come and go like that? Does he vanish out of our experience? Is he such an uncertain quantity? Can we get along without him as we get along with changed scenes and without our friends and classmates? No, there are other scenes, and we make new friends. But there is only one Divine Spirit. He fills all the universe, does not willingly withdraw himself from any life. We may spurn him, we may ignore his pleading and disobey his command, but the Divine Spirit remains with us. What blood is to the heart, air to the lungs, the Holy Spirit is to experience and life. We cannot do without him.

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PRAYER

Almighty God, whose Spirit is warp and woof of this world in which we live, we praise thee that thou art everywhere and always present. What the refreshing shower is to the thirsty roots, what the atmosphere is to the breathing leaves, thou art to us. We can do without friends, though that is not thy desire; we can live with little food, though thou desirest thy children to be well fed; we can exist without shelter, though thou dost give the bird his nest; but we cannot do without thy Spirit. Take not thy Holy Spirit from us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

TWENTY-SECOND DAY

THE SPIRIT'S PATIENCE

Read Exodus 20. 1-17

The Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man.—*Genesis 6. 3.*

From this statement one would judge that the Spirit is impatient rather than patient. Does not the Spirit who will not always strive reach the point of impatience? No. There may be a limit to patience, but that does not mean that the point of impatience has been reached. Study the patience of God's Spirit in the Bible. Man rebelled against God repeatedly, still the Spirit's patience was not exhausted. Man indulged in the grossest sins imaginable, yet the Spirit's voice called to the better way. When sin brought its logical and just punishment, God was not impatient. The Spirit is so steady and true that even under the most provoking circumtances he stands upon the ground of absolute justice and patience. One needs no more striking illustration of the Spirit's patience than God's dealing with Joseph and his brethren. How patient the Spirit was with Joseph's youthful insolence and conceit! His brethren too deserved nothing short of the severest punishment for their treatment of their brother. Their jealousy, hatred and murderous instincts brought them under the just penalty of divine wrath, yet divine patience was their heritage. We witness the incomparable joy of a family reunion, brothers in one another's arms, son rapturously kissing father, all the result not of the logic of events, but of the Spirit's infinite patience. Patience is the Spirit's policy in dealing with human frailty. "How oft should one forgive, seven times?" is the question of hesitant human nature. No, not "seven times; but, until seventy times seven," is the answer of the Spirit's patience. Patience has won many a victory for character. Peter was redeemed by the Spirit's patience manifested through Christ's attitude toward him. Guilty of repeated cause for impatience, it was the Spirit's patience that saw in Peter possibilities not revealed to the eyes of impatience. The Spirit's patience, available to all, will transform life.

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PRAYER

Holy Spirit, bestow upon us thy patience. We would not ask if we did not need. What oil is to the machine patience is to experience. Our human relationships are strained, often to the breaking point, because we lack patience. Give thy patience to pastors, in ministering to their people; to teachers, in dealing with their students; to all parents, in their attitude toward their children; to all workers, in bringing their task to completion. May we not be hurried, worried or carried off our feet by fear. In thy Holy Spirit's patience may we possess us our souls. Amen.

TWENTY-THIRD DAY

THE SPIRIT'S PART IN THE GREAT COMMISSION

Read Matthew 28. 16-20

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.—*Matthew 28. 19.*

To teach and baptize are the two explicit commands of the great commission. By the one, to impart wisdom; by the other, to transmit power. Does teaching always give wisdom, and baptism power? Not of themselves. Teaching, alone, is merely a mechanical act. Baptism, of itself, is no more than the preservation of a custom. It is only when the Holy Spirit empowers these acts that teaching gives evidence of divine approval, and baptism becomes the outward sign of an inner purpose. The church school is the greatest single opportunity of the evangelical churches. It is an opportunity wasted if the Spirit's guidance is not sought in all plans and programs. The individual teacher in the church school should be intellectually equipped; he must be spiritually prepared. The one prime necessity for a teacher is the Holy Spirit's presence in his life and work. A teacher having only the intellectual equipment may save a pupil from erroneous thinking; a teacher having spiritual preparation will save him from sinful living. The missionary who goes to teach the people of another land should be physically sufficient and mentally proficient; but he will prove himself equal to his high calling only as he is spiritually efficient. Many a teacher, preacher and missionary, splendidly equipped and of great promise, has registered zero in his achievement because he failed to give room for the Spirit's part in carrying out the great commission. Likewise the Holy Spirit rescues baptism from being an empty custom, with pagan proclivities. He lifts it into the realm of spiritual certainty, placing the seal of the divine upon the dedication of a human. The dearest spot in my church to me is not the pulpit (much as I love to preach); it is the baptismal font, to which parents by the hundreds have brought their little children, dedicating them to the Lord; before which youth and age have knelt and received the Spirit's approval of their consecration.

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PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we thank thee for thy great commission. What divine statesmanship it portrays! Thou art sending thy disciples out, not to impress the world with material power, with armies and navies and rich courts of diplomacy. The power we bear is of a different order. We go in the strength of thy Holy Spirit. Help us, we pray, each in his place of discipleship, to teach with the unction and receive baptism with the promise of the Holy Spirit's part in our appointed work. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY

SWORD OF THE PEACE PACT

Read Ephesians 6. 10-20

Take . . . the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.—*Ephesians 6. 17.*

ONE sword is allowable. Not only allowable but commendable. One may take pride in its possession. One may glory in its use. Most swords are better beaten into plowshares. To do that with this one would be a desecration. Most swords are meant for use in war; their use during peace has only a parade value. This sword has no parade value. Its fearless use in time of peace means that there will be no more war. What is this remarkable sword? It is the sword of the Spirit. It is the word of God. The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, says, "Thou shalt not kill." It is a divinely inspired word. It is a word which cannot be altered. It cannot have two interpretations, one interpretation for the individual and another for the nation. We cannot say that it is wrong for an individual to kill one other, but that it is right for a nation to kill ten thousand others; that retail killing is sinful, but wholesale killing is righteous; that it is to be regretted when one kills another on the basis of personal hatred or uncontrolled passion, but that it is to be commended when a nation kills fifty thousand others on the basis of patriotism. "One murder makes a villain, a million a hero," is the false logic of war. It is not the logic of God. It is not the logic of the sword of the peace pact. Christ carried the sword of the peace pact. He was steeped in the word of God. It was his protecting armament as well as his conquering weapon. On the flyleaf of the Bible of one of the noblest men who ever lived was penned this statement, "This Book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this Book." Pentecost honors this sword and bids the nations carry it as the instrument making effective their peace pacts. For peace comes by the Holy Spirit.

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PRAYER

God of the nations, look upon us in this day of our longing for peace. We are weary of war. Our wars have never won a single battle for peace. War to end war is a delusion and a snare. Forgive us that we have been lured into such an unchristian, unbiblical position. Help us to take thee at thy word. We here and now register our vow that we will never kill again. We will not go out with flying banners and false patriotism to the blood and carnage of the battlefield. God of the nations, we are done with war. In the name of the Prince of Peace. Amen.

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY

LINGUISTIC POWERS OF PENTECOST

Read 1 Corinthians 12. 1-11

And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?—*Acts 2. 8.*

THEY were not linguists. They were the ordinary run of men. Each understood his own language, but few understood any other language. Yet when the gospel was proclaimed that day every man understood what was said, every man in his own language. The linguistic miracle of Pentecost still abides. To-day the Good News is available to every man through the channel of his own native, well-beloved tongue. All men *hear* in their own tongue. The first task of the missionary is to spend two or three years learning the language of the land to which he goes. Wasted time! Not at all. Time well spent, that the people may hear, every one in his own tongue. Every man *reads* in his own language. The Scriptures are issued in seven hundred and seventy different languages and dialects. Travel where you will, in port cities or far interior, among civilized nations or untutored tribes, it is difficult to find a people to whom the Bible is not available in their own tongue. Pentecost come to earth again! Men *worship* in their own language. There rises on Morningside Heights, New York, a glorious cathedral, Saint John the Divine, a house of prayer for all people. Circling the choir on three sides is a series of chapels, each chapel dedicated to worship in a different tongue. Only a wall divides them. They are the architectural embodiment of the linguistic miracle of Pentecost. The human heart is reached through many languages. There is the language of need. Multitudes can understand no other language. If they hear the gospel at all they must hear it through ministry to their need. There is the language of healing, of the emotions, of the intellect, of idealism, of activity. All these languages, and many another, the Church of Jesus Christ knows and uses. All things to all men; every language of heart or head or human longing is Pentecost of the twentieth century.

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PRAYER

Almighty God, thou hast made of one blood but of many tongues all the nations of men. We thank thee that these tongues which seem to divide us may become, under Pentecost, the means of a closer unity. Thou hast given us many languages but one Spirit. May thy Spirit be our interpreter, giving thy messengers everywhere the understanding ear of thy children, and hearts responsive to the Pentecost tongue of love. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY

LOSS AND GAIN

Read John 16. 1-13

It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send him unto you.—*John 16. 7.*

ARE we to infer that we cannot experience at one and the same time the presence of both Christ and the Comforter? Must Christ withdraw before the Holy Spirit enters? Are the Saviour and the Spirit incompatible? Are they so at variance that one must go ere the other comes? Have they nothing in common? No, that cannot be the teaching of this statement. Christ and the Comforter work together. They are of the same substance. They are of one mind. They seek the same end. How is it then that Christ must go before the Comforter comes? I do not know that I can answer this question other than to state an abiding principle of life, namely, we frequently must experience loss before gain comes. This principle is more than the old saying, "There is no loss without some gain." It is the deep experience of the human heart. My father died when I was little more than a lad. My mother meant more to me after my father's death than before; and I meant more to her. Though only forty years of age she was an invalid. She could not leave the house without the help of others; finally she was confined entirely to the home. I was her chief support. I went to work in a worsted mill from sheer household necessity, "to keep the wolf from the door." The meager wages I brought home each week were like an answer to a prayer of extremity; they were that answer. I meant more to my mother, and my mother to me, than ever before. The feeling of comfort and necessity which we had, each for the other, was an experience which had been impossible had the bodily health and strong arm of my father been kept for us. Then later, when my mother went home, I had an experience of spiritual sustenance which I had not known before. This may not unravel the mystery of our Saviour's statement; it does give a hint of the reason for one of the intensely real chapters of human experience.

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PRAYER

Saviour, I thank thee to-day for the experience of loss and gain. Thou hast taught me not only that "there is no loss without some gain," but the deeper truth that sometimes the richest feeling of gain is in perfect harmony with the most poignant sense of loss. I thank thee that I have known, in the needful hour, the presence of the Comforter. And I have known that he has come through thine own sacrifice; thy infinite unselfishness has made possible the indescribable helpfulness of the Comforter, and I praise thee. Amen.

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY

THE SECRET OF COMMANDING GOODNESS

Read Acts 11. 19-26

For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. —*Acts 11. 24.*

Barnabas was a force for good among his fellows. His goodness was commanding. His influence was positive, not negative. His word counted for something. His counsel was sought and his advice heeded. When he came among the people he was made welcome. That was not because he was a "hail fellow, well met." He was a good man, sound at heart. His goodness was of the magnetic sort. He attracted rather than repelled. He won the confidence of men, not by his sophistry, but by his sincerity. His goodness was achieving. When he was about people came to church. Not only the disciples but strangers. They kept coming. They were "added unto the Lord." Only those who are attracted to the Lord, rather than the church, stay. What was the secret of this man's power? Was it personality? Was it an ingratiating presence? Was it the quality we moderns call "salesmanship"? Doubtless these had something to do with his popularity, his ability to get things done, but not everything. The secret was that the Divine Spirit dwelt in him. He was "full of the Holy Spirit and of faith." They go together. Faith is the power which accompanies the person of the Holy Spirit. They take a good man and make him effective. Mere goodness is not very impressive. Goodness, led by faith that dares and backed by the Holy Spirit, is commanding. The world stands in need of commanding goodness. Goodness like that exemplified by Louis Pasteur, who could turn his back upon a promising military career and enlist his talents in the battles for the betterment of mankind. He lived solely to do good, to fight sickness, to alleviate pain and suffering. He was the discoverer of many remedies and forms of treatment for ravaging diseases. Methods he advanced were often laughed at, but he proved them. New and strange then, they are universally followed to-day. He was once referred to as "the most perfect man who ever entered the kingdom of science." He was a nineteenth century Barnabas, a good man. He had faith in God and God's Spirit was with him.

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Prayer

God, our Father, renew our faith in goodness. May we see in Christian character the mightiest influence available. May we believe that the most effective weapons for warfare are not swords and guns, but words and deeds. May the goodness which we exemplify be so manly and womanly, so sincere and sympathetic, so straightforward and courageous, that we shall command the situations to which we are summoned. Thy Holy Spirit filling our lives will make this possible, and for this we pray. Amen.

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY

POWER TO CARRY ON

Read Acts 1. 1-9

Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses to me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.—*Acts 1. 8.*

Christ would leave, but the disciples would carry on. Power enabling them for the task should come from above. It would be the power of the Holy Spirit. That must have surprised the disciples. They were looking for power from another source. Their idea of power was authority, rule, legislation, armies, a throne. "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" was the question they asked. To their minds the kingdom could come only in tangible, material form. After all these centuries we too make the same mistake. We seek the Kingdom in great church structures, compelling programs, impressive organizations, advertisement, in the wide proclamation of what we are doing and what we are going to do. Power does not come in that way. The power of which Jesus spoke is always something over and above what can be seen and handled. It is above learning, money, position, ecclesiasticism. It does not despise these things. It uses them. It transforms them. It works through them. It is the power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit takes all materials and makes them mighty. The humblest church in Christendom is the bright gateway to new life if the Holy Spirit is there. The noblest temple reared by man for the praise of the Almighty is only an architectural pile for pride and show if the Holy Spirit does not have right of way through its long aisles and vaulted arches. What the Holy Spirit can do with a structure he can do, in multiplied forms and with increased power, with an individual. The individual becomes a witness. The highest honor the Saviour bestows upon his followers is to make them witnesses. By the simple act of witnessing through his disciples Jesus carries on. Witnessing becomes a varied act. One witnesses by word of mouth, written page, and song. Supremely witnessing is with the life. Deeds are the highest form of oratory. Deeds are eloquent. The order of witnessing must be noted. Jerusalem, Judæa, Samaria, the uttermost part of the earth. The order of the Holy Spirit is that one begins at home, but he does not stop until the last individual is reached. Home and Foreign Missions are one.

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PRAYER

Heavenly Father, give us power that we too may witness. Help us that we may not trust too much the material equipment of our churches to do the work of the Kingdom. We thank thee for spacious cathedrals, richly furnished; for great organs, choirs in noble procession; for mighty preachers with their convincing messages, but all is in vain without thy Holy Spirit. We must have the presence of thy Spirit or we cannot carry on. In Jesus' name. Amen.

TWENTY-NINTH DAY

THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A GIFT

Read Luke 11. 5-13

> **If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?—** ***Luke 11. 13.***

ARE you a parent? If you are you feel accurately the pulse of this statement. You know the willingness with which parents bestow gifts upon their children. Not only willingness, but pride and sheer joy. Parents do not always give wisely to their children, but they give. Many a child has been ruined by unwise giving on the part of parents. That is evil giving, not good giving. It is so difficult for parents to understand that young people profit more by what they obtain than by what they merely receive. To reach out the hand to receive, is one thing. To stretch forth the hand to work and obtain, is another thing. But the great fact of the generations remains, as Luke states it, parents love to give. Parents of all sorts, good, bad and indifferent. They shower gifts upon their children.

Parents do not mean to give any but good gifts. Their eyes of love would make every gift good. Now over against this loving, lavish giving of human parents put the willing, wise giving of our heavenly Father. What does he give? The consciousness of his presence. The indwelling of his Spirit. That is the gift of gifts.

I have a son, some years yet from being of age. But the time will come when he will have to face the world for himself. When that time comes I want him to go out with a good education, with a sound moral and spiritual training; with the happy memory of many bright hours we have had together; of picnics, fishing trips, hikes through the woods, and journeys to spots of historic interest. But more than anything else I want him to go out from his old home with the absolute assurance that God goes with him, that the Holy Spirit, willing gift of his heavenly Father, is his, day and night.

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PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we thank thee for all thy gifts, so numerous, so beautiful. We are most conscious of the gifts that come as a part of our common life, in response to our daily need. We are grateful for health and strength, for sleep and rest, for food and raiment, for work and hands with which to do our work, for friends and human society, for sun and rain. Now we ask for thy Holy Spirit. We want to know that God dwells in us. We desire this gift, neither seen nor handled, but as real as breathing, more necessary than hands or feet. Lord, let Pentecost come to our souls. Amen.

THIRTIETH DAY

THE HOLY SPIRIT AS REMINDER

Read Ecclesiastes 12

The Holy Ghost, . . . shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.—*John 14. 26.*

My sister sometimes brings to my remembrance things which happened in our childhood home. Our parents died, close together, while we were young. My sister remembers words, scenes, events and experiences which abide very dimly in my memory. But they are there and need only her words to call them to remembrance. She lives on the Pacific Coast, I on the Atlantic. The rare occasions when we get together furnish us a feast of remembrance. Our father and mother, earnest Christian people, who had their struggles with serious illness and financial setbacks, and were honest and happy through it all, live again as they are called to remembrance. Things mother said and did, her gentleness and patience, her long-suffering, her face lighted with a winsome smile, are heard and seen called to remembrance by my sister's words. My father's forgotten acts and attitudes, his noble ambitions, unrealized (he longed to be a writer), are revived by the picture my sister paints. It was this very work of stirring up the memory that the Holy Spirit was to do for the disciples. He would call to mind their Master's forgotten words and looks. He would remind them of Gethsemane. He would call to their attention the words of the matchless consecration prayer, "Not my will but thine be done." The Holy Spirit would lead them again into the upper room, there to sit with their Saviour at the Last Supper; there to see again his strong face, "steadfastly set"; there to hear once more his parting words of instruction and inspiration. The Holy Spirit would remind them of Calvary and the cross, of his agony there for them. He would cheer their fainting hearts with the remembrance of Christ's resurrection, victor over all, they to follow in his steps.

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PRAYER

Holy Spirit, continue in our lives thy work of calling all needful things to our remembrance. Stir up our memory. We are prone to forget. Speak to us again of the happy day upon which we made the great decision; of the overflowing joy when we united with thy church; of the resolutions for service we made. Let us not forget the glad hours "when heaven came down our souls to meet, and glory crowned the mercy seat." Call to our remembrance all things, not to lead us to live in the past, but to cause the past to make more profitable the service of the future. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

THIRTY-FIRST DAY

THE HOLY SPIRIT AS REPROVER

Read Jeremiah 2. 1-9

And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.—*John 16. 8.*

I HAVE never been as impressed with the influence of a person in a community as on a visit to a city in England. And the man was not living, he had been dead many years. The city was Bedford, the man John Bunyan. Bedford is a city of forty thousand population, and one is reminded at every turn of the great Dreamer. At Elstow, a tiny hamlet at the edge of Bedford, where Bunyan was born, one reads the record of his baptism and stands by the very font at which his parents dedicated him to God. Separated from the church, yet close to it, is the tower containing the bell that called the people to worship. John, as a youth, loved to ring the bell. One day he climbed the ladder to his accustomed task, reached out his hands to take the rope, but quickly drew them back. A voice within was speaking to him, telling him he was not worthy to ring the bell that called people to worship God. John turned and descended the ladder; the bell that morning did not ring. The voice in the bell tower was the voice of the Holy Spirit, reproving him for his waywardness. That reproving voice followed him. He heard it in the little two-room cottage in which he and his bride set up housekeeping. While his marriage brought him no wealth it did bring him a wife of gentle and beautiful piety, a winsome young woman whose influence in his life was a daily encouragement to the Holy Spirit's voice. The reproving voice followed him as he went about the town plying his trade. It went with him through his army experience. It never left him until he surrendered to God, set up the altar of faith in his home, and dedicated himself to the complete fulfillment of the Holy Spirit's purpose. Bedford, the thriving Bunyan Church in Bedford, the Bunyan Memorials so well cared for, the book, *Pilgrim's Progress*, which he wrote in the old prison on the bank of the stream which divides the city, these and many other things are a perpetual illustration of the truth that the Holy Spirit reproves of sin, and will follow a life to the uttermost to bring it back to God.

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PRAYER

Gracious Father, we thank thee for thy voice, the voice of the Holy Spirit. It is a tender voice, lovingly, entreatingly, yearningly calling us back to thee. We cannot escape that clear voice. We hear its affectionate reproof to whatever depths we sink or whatever heights we climb. Continue to call, and may our ears never be deaf to the Holy Spirit's reproving voice. Amen.

THIRTY-SECOND DAY

THE HOLY SPIRIT AS GUIDE

Read Numbers 9. 15-23

When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: . . . he will show you things to come.—*John 16. 13.*

I HAVE been walking again the paths I walked thirty years ago. Then, still in my teens, I supplied, as a local preacher, the old mountain charge in the Erie Conference. I traveled afoot, every Sunday and between the Lord's days, the twelve miles of the circuit. Without father or mother to advise me (they were both gone), the Holy Spirit was my guide. I am as sure of that as of any other fact of my experience. It was reaffirmed in my mind to-day in my revisit to those old scenes, and as I have rewalked those former paths. The Holy Spirit directed my steps and led in my life plans. Every door that opened was by the certain direction of the Holy Spirit. The things that have come since, he showed me then, though at that time they were largely hidden from my view. The Holy Spirit guided my acts as well as my thoughts. He directed them in the way of truth. Truth is not only a system of straight thinking; it is also a way of right living. Now this experience of which I have just testified is in no wise unusual or unique. It is the recital in my own language, out of my own years, of that which has taken place in your life. Every sincere follower of Christ is witness to the experience that the Holy

Spirit guides him into true thinking and true living. That is truth, to think truly and to act truly. Why have you done what you have done? Why is your life to-day what it is? Why, in that crucial experience a few years back, did you not take a different course? At many a point in the pathway of the years you might have taken another road, a road that to all outward appearances promised greater success. But you did not. Why? If pressed for a logical answer you could not give one. Your life has been guided by the Holy Spirit. That answer is sufficient. I ask no more for the future than the past has given. The sentiment of the hymn is both my experience and my prayer,

> Holy Spirit, faithful guide,
> Ever near the Christian's side.

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PRAYER

Father of all mercies, our hearts are full of gratitude for thy guidance through all the past. Thou hast brought us "by a way that" we "knew not"; thou hast led us "in paths" we "have not known." Thou hast made "darkness light before" us, "and crooked things straight." All this thou hast done, and more, by the gift of thy Holy Spirit. Thou hast made truth an experience for hands and feet as well as head; thou hast guided our acts as truly as our thoughts. We are where we are to-day by the guidance of thy Spirit. We bless thy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

THIRTY-THIRD DAY

THE HOLY SPIRIT AS TESTIFIER

Read Genesis 31. 43-49

When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness.—*John 15. 26, 27.*

Testimony has not yet passed entirely out of fashion. The witnesser fills an important rôle in every realm. The validity of our courts of justice is based almost entirely upon testimony. The wisdom of the presiding judge, his fair-mindedness, his ability to discern between what is false and what is true, to rule out that which has no bearing upon a particular case in point, and to admit the testimony of truth, however damaging it may be to either side—these things all have much to do with the esteem in which a court, as an institution of justice, is held. Above all else, however, justice rises or falls on the integrity of the witnesses and on the confidence that may be placed in their testimony. Also the witness enters the laboratory and tells what takes place in that fascinating room of research. In all the activities touching the welfare of mankind no one occupies a more important place than the witness. That does not exclude religion. Testimony is of inestimable value there. Our authority for this statement is none other than the Holy Spirit himself. The Holy Spirit testifies of the Saviour. He holds up before the eyes of a sinning world the redeeming grace of a sufficient Saviour. He enters the innermost recesses of human thinking and feeling and there gives his testimony of the place and power of Christ in meeting the needs of mankind. The Comforter also gives sanction to our witnessing. "Ye also shall bear witness," is our authoritative commission. We are too fearful of our testimony. Testimony, however halting, if it comes from the heart, is more potent to help and heal than pages of accurate scholarship and passages of climactic eloquence. The church that moves forward is the testifying church. The church of power is the church where the Spirit-hallowed custom of testimony still prevails. The church that grows is the church that waters the seeds of truth and experience with the refreshing showers of honest testimony.

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PRAYER

Gracious Father, we thank thee for testimony. We are grateful for the memory of helpful hours when in public places we have heard thy disciples tell with their own lips their own experience. We too have discovered a thrill of indescribable joy when we have shaken off our shyness and stood up to tell what great things the Lord hath done for us. As testifiers we are in honorable company, for the Holy Spirit himself is the mightiest witness of all, imparting to us his courage and power. For which we praise thee. Amen.

THIRTY-FOURTH DAY

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND BENEFICENCE

Read Galatians 6. 1-10

And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.—*Acts 2. 44, 45.*

The community customs of the Pentecostal Christians are both beautiful and challenging. They had all things in common. They who had much sold their possessions and placed the proceeds in one treasury. They divided their goods, and every man received according to his need. That is beautiful. Is it a first century approach to socialism? If it is, it is commendable. If Christian discipleship means anything it means sharing materials as well as experiences. It is well to testify what the Lord has done for us. But that does not take the place of what we should do for one another. The sight of the early Christians having all things in common is challenging as well as beautiful. We are challenged to do, not necessarily the same thing, but something. Living conditions have vastly changed since Pentecost. Society has been revolutionized. Life is infinitely more complex now than then. To have things in common then was comparatively simple. A few hundred Christians, or a few thousand at the most, set in the midst of an unsympathetic, often cruelly oppressive, government, would naturally be brought close together. In our day, millions of Christians, widely separated, living under several different forms of government, could hardly duplicate the social structure of Pentecost. That, however, does not mean that all Christians everywhere to-day lack a common interest and obligation. To-day discipleship fulfills the Pentecostal community interest by wise and unselfish beneficence. The Holy Spirit is at work in all the benevolent enterprises of the church. One illustration will suffice. Within eight miles of my residence are two Homes, both founded and maintained by the church. One is a Home for the aged, the other is a Home for orphaned and dependent children. Christians who have more than they need for themselves give that others who have less than they need may be provided for. Under the leading of the Holy Spirit they are having things in common. Pentecost is fulfilled in the complex social structure of modern life.

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PRAYER

"All things come of thee, O Lord, and of thine own have we given thee." We pray that we may make this prayer-chant increasingly true in our experience. May thy Spirit lead us to share. Save us from selfishness. Give us a generous mind, a heart that refuses to hoard, eyes ever vigilant to need, hands that happily serve, a pocketbook that opens easily and often. We do not pray that we may be charitable, but fair. We yield all that we are and have to thy Holy Spirit's control. Amen.

THIRTY-FIFTH DAY

PETER OF PENTECOST

Read Acts 2. 14-21

But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, . . . hearken to my words.—*Acts 2. 14.*

PETER of Pentecost was a different man than the Peter pictured in other places in the New Testament. He was not the shrinking Peter of the fireside, cowed by a servant maid; nor the daring Peter of the sea, essaying to walk on the water; nor the effusive Peter of the well-remembered conversation when he declared to his Lord, "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." The Peter of Pentecost was an entirely different Peter. Standing that day before the mixed throng he is master of himself and master of the multitude. He holds the situation as in the hollow of his hand. He speaks and the people listen. His speech is logical. He traces the story of Pentecost through prophecy and history. He recalls events with which those who listen are fairly familiar but many have forgotten. His speech is bold. Not the boldness that repels by its brazenness, but the boldness that wins by its admirable courage. His speech is wise. He shows a wisdom that is more than human. The divine voice speaks through him. Peter of Pentecost gives the impression of complete triumph. He carries everything before him. Not by the allurements of eloquence, but by the logical onsweep of events.

What made Peter of Pentecost Peter the transformed, Peter the victorious? The Holy Spirit. Since that day multitudes of others have had power with men because of the presence of the Spirit with them. The magic, mystic influence of certain men over multitudes can be accounted for on no other basis. Not talent, eloquence, wealth, personal appearance, boldness, wisdom, cleverness, nor any other quality can account for the influence of men like Savonarola, Knox, Wesley, Livingstone, Moody and a thousand thousand others. The Holy Spirit was their personal experience. God came in, through his Spirit, to give guidance to their steps, strength to their arms and conviction to their tongues. Pentecost was repeated in their souls. In our day the mediocre becomes mighty through every repeated Pentecost.

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PRAYER

Come, Holy Spirit, change us as thou didst change Peter. We too have sinned the sin of Peter. We have denied when we should have affirmed; made large promises that meant little; been careless with words that were not backed up by deeds. We ask thy forgiveness and pray that thy Spirit may work his wonderful transformation in us, that Pentecost may come to our souls. Amen.

THIRTY-SIXTH DAY

PAUL AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

Read 1 Corinthians 13

I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost.—*Romans 9. 1.*

Saint Paul's speech was to be depended upon. Here is a fivefold testimony to that effect. He spoke the truth, the truth in Christ; he did not lie, his conscience bore him witness, witness in the Holy Spirit. One who has the Holy Spirit will always be a man of truth. You can depend upon the words and teachings of such a man. Joseph Parker was like that. For thirty-nine years, from the pulpit of City Temple, London, he spoke the truth in Christ, his conscience bearing him witness in the Holy Spirit. If the truth touched the king or the prince, Parliament or the Cabinet, it was not altered; it was the truth and as the truth should be spoken. Even to-day, after all these years, one feels the Pauline personality of the mighty Parker as he steps within the City Temple. There is the pulpit Bible Parker used so many years. Opening it to the flyleaf one reads this sentence, "I value these signatures in every sense, especially as the manuals of Christian men and women." This is in the handwriting of Joseph Parker, together with his name. Then follow a number of signatures, among them Frances E. Willard, Robert Moffatt, William E. Gladstone, Charles H. Spurgeon, Henry Ward Beecher, James Chalmers. The *People's Bible*, the crown of

Parker's literary effort, while far from exhaustive as a commentary, is a passionately eloquent and fearless advocate of the truth of God as revealed in the pages of the Bible. I like to think of Parker because he helps me visualize Paul. Paul stood in Athens, Rome, Corinth, Ephesus and every strategic center whither Providence led him, as Parker stood in London, an ardent advocate of the truth. The truth meant more to Saint Paul than anything else. His logical mind would not permit of a falsehood nor of a false impression. Christ was truth to him. Christ, the ultimate truth, was revealed to him by his own experience, by his conscience, and last, making it absolute in his mind, by the witness of the Holy Spirit.

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PRAYER

Father, we thank thee for the truth. It is worth more to mankind than gold or precious stones. We praise thee for men of truth. For men like Saint Paul who speak the truth. Forgive us when, under the temptation to be eloquent or pleasing, we have slighted the truth. Thy religion is truth. May thy truth be imparted to us and strengthened in us by thy Holy Spirit. Let a Pentecost of passion for the truth come to our souls, we pray. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

THIRTY-SEVENTH DAY

SIMEON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

Read Luke 2. 25-32

There was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; . . . and he came by the Spirit into the temple.—*Luke 2. 25-27.*

Were I an artist, searching for a great theme for a canvas, I would turn to the second chapter of Luke, and beginning at the twenty-first verse I would read slowly, thoughtfully, preferably aloud, through the thirty-fourth verse. Those fourteen verses would be the theme for my picture. Read this selection and see if the artist in you does not rise and demand that you procure paints and brushes immediately and set to work! The picture would portray a beautiful custom. We would see the mother, at the appointed time, accompanied by the father, bringing their child to the temple, "to present him to the Lord." Making their offering of "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons," for they had no lamb, we would see them bowed reverently before their sacrifice. Who is this in the center of the picture? He is an old man. He is devout. He shows by his attitude that he is well acquainted with the house of God and knows how one should comport himself within the sanctuary. His countenance reveals a happiness that reaches far beneath the surface. It is the joy of a lifetime hope fulfilled, the ardent expectancy of the years come to realization. Look, what has he done? He has reached out his hands, he has taken from the mother's bosom the son of her love, the child of prophecy. He holds him in his arms. With a light in his eyes "that never was on land or sea," he lifts his voice and gives thanks in one of the noblest prose-poems of the centuries, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." Such is the picture I would paint, a canvas priceless and immortal. There would have to be one added touch. It could not be given with the brush. Only by suggestion could I convey the central truth that the Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he "should not see death until he had seen the Lord's Christ." So he waited, nor was his waiting in vain.

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PRAYER

Father, thou who art revealing thyself to the hearts of men through thy Holy Spirit; thou who, making promises, keepeth them inviolate, we thank thee for the testimony of Simeon. May thy Spirit give us such strength and hope that we shall gladly frequent thy temple, tarrying there, to see thy salvation, long years if need be, knowing that our waiting cannot be fruitless. In Jesus' name. Amen.

THIRTY-EIGHTH DAY

JOB AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

Read Job 28. 20-28

There is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.—*Job 32. 8.*

Westminster Abbey is the heart of the British Empire. It is more than a place of worship. It is a shrine of sacred memories and a fortress of strong hopes. British ambition for the future is rooted in respect for the past. This wholesome feeling is revealed at every turn as one wanders through the Abbey. The alcove where statesmen's statues stand, the corner dedicated to perpetuating the memory of poets, the great choir where rest the remembered ashes of kings and queens, all have a fascination for the visitor. One spot, visited by a vast number, over which soft-spoken people tarry the longest, while their eyes fill with tears, is the memorial stone, set in the cathedral floor, beneath which rest the mortal remains of David Livingstone. Long centuries separate Job and Livingstone, yet I think of them together. Standing by Livingstone's memorial I say to myself, This man was very much like Job. How? They were both great believers. The argument of friends, the losses of the years, the tragic sorrows of the soul, terrible physical suffering could not shake Job's faith in the Almighty. The missionary had a similar quenchless faith. They were both men of infinite patience. They knew how to wait. Job could bide his time without complaint until the reasons for his apparently reasonless pain were revealed to him. Livingstone was never hurried. He knew that a thousand years with God were as "a watch in the night." Most of all I place these two men together because they both believed with passionate confidence that "there is a Spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." They saw in every man the promise of the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. Livingstone's fading strength wrote these words, "All I can add in my solitude is, may heaven's rich blessing rest on every one, American, English, or Turk, who will help to heal this open sore of the world." Other sheep, not of his fold, would surely some day hear the Shepherd's voice, answer the Spirit's call, and receive the inspiration of the Almighty.

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PRAYER

Father of us all, of every name and sign; who hast made of one blood all the peoples of the earth; who desirest not that one of thy children should perish; who longest to bring all men to understanding, to impart to all wisdom, to enlighten all minds; hear us in our confession of ignorance and narrowmindedness. Forgive us our lack of faith. Let thy Holy Spirit enlighten us! May our eyes of love and understanding behold the whiteness of soul in every race. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

THIRTY-NINTH DAY

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND MOTHERHOOD

Read Luke 1. 46-56

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.—*Matthew 1. 18.*

I LIKE Matthew. He has the gifts of the historian rather than the poet. He is not carried away by visions, imaginations and dreams. He is most matter-of-fact. With him, words are not paints and brushes for the artist's use, they are tools for the carpenter's hands. Matthew's eye is clear, his judgment is balanced, his heart honest. I think of all this when I read the first chapter of his record. That is what it is, a record. I can easily imagine myself in the office of vital statistics at the county seat or city hall, reading over the fully attested record of births. My eye lights upon this one, strange, unusual, unique in all the annals of births. I rub my eyes to be sure I am reading correctly. I look more closely, pausing for a long time over this one case. I cannot be mistaken. Here it is, plainly written, the authentic record, "Mary, . . . found with child of the Holy Spirit." No other explanation is given. Why should there be? I could not understand even if it were fully explained. Some things I gladly leave to the infinite power of God. I willingly wait for the understanding that shall come with the unrolling of the scroll of time. Reading this record I find sufficient explanation and understanding for the present in the words of Jesus, "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible." Matthew opens a window and light floods the room, a bit later, as he recalls the prophet's word, "A virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." God was with Mary. God is with all mothers. The Holy Spirit honored, in a particular sense, the mother of Jesus. He honors, in a powerful sense, the mothers of all men. Motherhood is sacred. The Holy Spirit lifts motherhood into that realm. The sordid and sensual become spiritual when the process of birth stands face to face with the purpose of God. God's purpose is not solely to people the earth, to multiply mankind. It is to make all children of men children of God. This he does by adding to the pains and pangs of motherhood the power and peace of the Holy Spirit.

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PRAYER

Gracious Father, who understandest the mother's heart, we thank thee to-day for thy love revealed to us through faithful mothers. We pray for all mothers. May those who suffer find their pain alleviated through the remembrance that the Son of God came to Saviourhood along the royal road of earthly motherhood. Give the advantages of scientific medical skill to mothers everywhere. Withhold not the joy of thy Holy Spirit's presence from a single mother anywhere. In Jesus' name. Amen.

FORTIETH DAY

PENTECOSTAL PAGES

Read 2 Peter 1. 16-21

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.—*2 Peter 1. 21.*

THERE is a difference in pages as in people. Pages have personality. A page is stamped with the personality of the one who produces the page. Unless one is a mere copyist he reveals his own mental powers and soul qualities upon the page he writes. An earnest student of literature will learn these trade-marks of the pen. Tolstoy will not be mistaken for Tennyson, nor Lowell for Longfellow. The student of literature will not put the Browning imprint upon the Bunyan page; dealing with the same fundamental truth, they are as different as night and day. One who knows will not read the pages of Washington Irving under the impression that the lines of Fenimore Cooper are running beneath his eyes. Consider the Book of books, the work of many authors, but of one Personality. Many centuries are represented in its pages, yet one Spirit is evident from the first page to the last. Great writing is not the result of outward pressure, but of an inward urge. Enduring books are not written for the market. Rather they are written because they must be written. Something within inspires the thoughts, drives the pen. I think of the Bible as being thus written. The authorship of the Book of books is not the authorship of choice, but of necessity. Prophets, martyrs, saints and sages could not do other than write. It was the inner urge. The Holy Spirit was within, luring them to write. It was the inspiration of compulsion. I do not mean that they were mere automatons, recording with machinelike action whatever was said to them. They used their brains. They were living, thinking scribes. As *a spirit* wrought upon Shakespeare's pages, so *the Spirit* stamped the pages of the prophets and apostles with the imprint of his authority and personality. They are uniquely inspired and faithfully characterized as Pentecostal pages.

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PRAYER

Almighty God, author of all true inspiration, we praise thee for the pages of thy Book. We thank thee for the imprint of inspiration and authority the Holy Spirit places upon these enduring messages. The Bible which thou hast given to men is worthy the highest reverence, demands the deepest study. May we not be afraid *of* thy Book, nor yet afraid *for* it. The Bible invites every question, every scientific test, and from it all it emerges with the sanest, surest message for man's need. We thank thee for thy Holy Spirit, who sheds upon the Bible's sacred pages his radiant light. Amen.

FORTY-FIRST DAY

PENTECOSTAL PATHS

Read Galatians 5. 16-26

Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.—*Galatians 5. 16.*

The highest street in the world is the Alamada, La Paz. The richest is Park Avenue, New York. The widest is Market Street, Philadelphia. The narrowest, Via Sol, Havana. The shortest is Rue Ble, Paris. The cleanest is Via Castile, Seville. The dirtiest, Tchangsti Street, Nanking. The most beautiful, generally accepted, although many cities are ready to dispute this judgment, is Avenue de Champs Elysées, Paris. The most desirable street of all is the street of the Spirit. Pentecost points us to a path we all should travel. People are following many highways these days. America is on the go. With one automobile for every five of the population there are few families in the United States who do not seek many paths during the summer months. Most of the highways are plainly marked. If one is in a strange country he has only to pause at the intersection and note the clear direction given on the sign post. The thousands of miles of improved roads, with the accompanying sign posts of direction and information, constitute one of the marvels of our generation. The Pentecostal path is quite as extensive and even more clearly marked. The directions, where are they? Here they are, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." The street of the Spirit and the way of lust lead somewhere. The one leads to life, the other to destruction. Along the first may be found joy, peace, contentment, happy and helpful companions. Along the other will be found discontent, regret, remorse, headache, heartache. Two great highways cross the United States. The Lincoln Highway crosses east and west from Newark to San Francisco. The Dixie Highway crosses north and south, from Mackinaw to Miami. The street of the Spirit extends north and south, east and west, and every other direction. The compass knows no point that is not reached by some Pentecostal path. The street of the Spirit is more than a tried and traveled way. It furnishes abundant opportunity for adventurous souls. Those who wish to dare some new venture for mankind, some fresh praise to God, are free to explore. They will find that their spirits are not restrained from any good path.

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PRAYER

God, our Father, thou art our guide. We praise thee to-day for the paths along which thou hast led us. They have been ways of peace. Howbeit they have never been prosaic. Thy path is the living, throbbing way of high adventure. Thy street holds for him who walks it the incomparable charm of human interest. Upon thy Pentecostal paths thy dews of refreshing fall. "Holy Spirit, faithful Guide, keep thou near the Christian's side." Amen.

FORTY-SECOND DAY

PENTECOSTAL SUNDAYS

Read Revelation 1. 4-11

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.—*Revelation 1. 10.*

JOHN kept Sunday. He was "in the Spirit." To be in that state means there will be no desecration of the Lord's day. Sunday is meant for a special purpose. From the beginning of the social order it has been a day dedicated to the Spirit and to things of the Spirit. One is untrue to the natural human instinct, as well as disobedient to the divine command, when he deliberately frustrates the purpose of the Lord's day. One starves his own soul, robs his body and mind of their necessary physical and mental vitamins, when he forgets the Creator's purpose of the one day in seven. One may have a *good time* on Sunday doing anything he pleases, utterly neglectful of the purpose of the day. But he will have the *best time* on Sunday when he is in the Spirit. We are grateful as a nation that our Presidents have so generally remembered that this is a Christian nation, have recognized the spiritual value of Sunday and have themselves been in the Spirit on that day. I am writing these lines on the mountain top at Kane, Pennsylvania. One of the recollections of this community is of a visit President Grant made to General Kane. The President spent three days, extending over Sunday, in this region, which was then very largely a vast virgin forest. The clear mountain streams, alive with fish, lured the President. What was to hinder him, in this frontier country, going out for a little fishing on Sunday afternoon! But he did not. As the President of a Christian nation he kept in the Spirit. He went to the nearest place of religious service, a Methodist meeting held in a schoolhouse, and heard the circuit rider, Alva Wilder, preach. In the Spirit one hears more than the voice of the preacher. John heard a great voice as of a trumpet. That great voice is not heard in the automobile, on the golf course, on selfish-pleasure-bent on the Lord's day. The great trumpet voices of the soul are heard only by those who keep faith on the Lord's day, as on every day, with the Creator's wise purpose in his gift of the days.

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PRAYER

Gracious Father, we praise thee for the gift of time, for the seasons, for months, weeks and days. We thank thee that the days have meaning, and that one day has a sublime purpose. We are grateful for our Lord's interpretation of his own day, that his day "was made for man." We pray that we may accept and use our Lord's day as he intends. May we not feel that it is a day of restrictions, soberly bound round with blue laws; rather may we think of it as a day of privilege, happily adorned with special opportunities. May we experience the liberty of Pentecost every Sunday, the liberty of those who walk in the Spirit. In thine own name, Lord of the Sabbath. Amen.

FORTY-THIRD DAY

PENTECOSTAL IGNORANCE

Read Acts 19. 1-6

Paul . . . said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be an Holy Ghost.—*Acts 19. 2.*

Many of us, like the disciples at Ephesus, must plead ignorance. We earnestly desire that our ignorance shall be turned to knowledge. How can that be done? Honoré Willsie Morrow tells how she was enlightened in her girlhood's groping through doubt to faith. "Sunday school out already?" asked her father. She shook her head. "No, I just came home, I don't like the things the teacher talks about. I've decided not to try to be a Christian." "No?" Her father raised his eyebrows. "Why not?" She blurted out the hard facts. "You don't go to church, so you aren't a Christian, dad, and mother's a Unitarian." Her father's blue eyes darkened as he turned to the mother and said, "You know I warned you of all this. It'll mark her all her life. Of course I leave the training of them to you, but in this instance you're making a mistake." Her mother drew her girl gently to her to ask her the question, "Why aren't you a Christian, dear?" "I told you," she answered obstinately, "you don't believe in the Holy Ghost." The father pulled his chair closer to the mother and their puzzled daughter and asked, "What is the Holy Ghost? I've often wanted to know." "I believe in the Holy Ghost," explained the mother. "Holy Ghost is the ancient expression for Divine Spirit. Christ had more of the Divine Spirit than any man before or since. God is that Spirit and that Spirit is God. They are one. Do you understand?" the mother asked, looking first at the father, then at their daughter. They both nodded their heads. This incident may not entirely dispel our ignorance, but it helps. Someone has said that the "Holy Spirit is God's influence." That may not be theologically accurate, but it is spiritually helpful. It is helpful to know that God is present in the world, and that the Holy Spirit is that presence. That, of course, means infinitely more than an influence; it means the Divine Presence. If we do not know God's Holy Spirit we are ignorant followers. If we do not desire him we are derelict disciples.

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PRAYER

Almighty God, God of all knowledge, enlighten our minds. Be patient with us in our ignorance. We are but little children in these deep matters of the soul. We desire to be healed of all the unhealthy ideas about thy Holy Spirit which, like a cancer, have grown within our minds. Give us that conception of the Holy Spirit which is sane, reasonable and understandable. Grant us the inquiring mind, the questing habit that will not rest until thy Divine Spirit is as real to us as the Christ of history and the Saviour of experience. In his name and for his sake. Amen.

FORTY-FOURTH DAY

PENTECOSTAL CONVICTION

Read Isaiah 40. 1-11

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart.—*Acts 2. 37.*

THEY were not swayed by the eloquence of Peter. Doubtless he was eloquent. Earnestness is eloquence and Peter was dead in earnest. Nor was it Peter's logic that moved them. His sermon was logical. It is a model of logical, orderly arrangement. He traces through prophecy, history, and experience the Saviour's work in the world, climaxing his address with the recital of the triumphant outcome of that work. They who listened were pricked in their heart. Is not this the purpose of all preaching, to reach the hearts of the people? Conviction comes through the heart, not the head. True preaching will not insult the head, it will respect the intellect; but the appeal for decision and action will be made to the heart. One day I made a special trip to "Thieves' Kitchen," London. It used to be that. It was as much as a man's life was worth to go there, day or night. Bobbies traveled there two and two. Now the whole atmosphere of the section has changed. "Father" Stanton, a Church of England clergyman, against the advice of his friends, in the face of the opposition of his superiors, much to the disgust of the people of that locality, went there declaring, "I am going to put the gospel to the test. I am going to show London that a church can be built and maintained in "Thieves' Kitchen." He lived the life of Christ among them. They were pricked in their heart and began to seek the better way. As a result there is to-day in that corner of London a strong church, with accompanying institutions of clubs, school and a hospital. Pentecost is a reality in "Thieves' Kitchen." So the Holy Spirit moves upon the hearts of men everywhere. Not neglecting the head, not insulting the intellect, his special appeal is to the heart. The heart is the seat of authority as well as affection. The heart is the Supreme Court, handing down the final decision. The word *pricked* gives a vivid picture of what actually happened. The people were stirred into immediate action.

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PRAYER

My God and Father, I thank thee that my religion is a logical thing, that my faith meets the test of my intellect. I am grateful that there is so much in the gospel that appeals to my mind, that I find a sheer mental delight in the scholarly heights reached by Jesus and Paul and all the writers of the New Testament. But to-day I am especially thankful for my heart. Keep my heart true. May I be pricked in my heart when I am inclined to doubt or denial. Keep Pentecost alive in my heart, I pray. In Jesus' name. Amen.

FORTY-FIFTH DAY

PENTECOSTAL AMAZEMENT

Read 1 Corinthians 14. 1-9

They were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?—*Acts 2. 12.*

THERE have been many amazing things in religious history. From the day of Pentecost to this day of grace the Holy Spirit has been surprising people with his achievements. He has not done these things for amazement; amazement has been the natural result rather than the studied effect. All Jerusalem was amazed that every man heard the truth proclaimed in his own tongue. All Scotland was amazed at the courage, and the results of that courage, of John Knox. All England was amazed at the following aroused by the preaching of the little giant, John Wesley. No one has summed up his work in more vivid language than Charles Aked, who said of John Wesley, "He saved England from hell." Historians have been as amazed in trying to account for Wesley's influence as his contemporaries were in experiencing it. Every Christian movement having cleansing, permanent effect is a surprise. Revivals that are planned lack power. Spiritual campaigns that are worked up usually do not pan out; they peter out. The Holy Spirit uses as his instruments for amazement, humble people. They are not aware that they are being used. They are quite as amazed as the multitude. Dwight L. Moody is a classic example of amazement wrought through the work of the Holy Spirit. Moody was a most unlikely man to be used by the Almighty. With no background of school, utterly lacking the educational qualifications the world would demand, yet he commanded the attention of the thinkers of his day, and led scholars to heights they of themselves could never attain. There is no accounting for the influence of Dwight L. Moody outside the Holy Spirit. Surrendered to the Divine Spirit, led by the Spirit, Moody the man was lost sight of, Moody the mouthpiece of the Eternal was lifted up. The man himself and the work he did constituted a Pentecostal amazement. He remained Moody the humble to the last hour of his useful life. God wrought through him the Spirit's amazing work, while men asked, What meaneth this?

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PRAYER

O God, restore unto us the amazing power of Pentecost. Forgive us our exaltation of self above the Spirit. We have yearned too much to see our own name in print rather than the Spirit's name in power. Thou wilt repeat the miracle of Pentecost as often as thou art able to find men of Pentecostal mind. Lord, we surrender to thee. Make and keep us humble. Let our lives be a free-flowing channel for the amazing work of thy Holy Spirit. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

FORTY-SIXTH DAY

PENTECOSTAL ADDITION

Read Matthew 18. 7-14

The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.—*Acts 2. 47.*

It is a heartening matter to have a church where pastor and people are busy with the activities of addition. There are so many things about a church demanding strength and time that we neglect the supreme thing, the addition of people. Running the machine, raising money, representing interests, all important items, yet how many of us permit them to keep us from the real task, addition! The processes of subtraction are never idle. People are constantly leaving the church by one gateway or another. There is the gateway that leads to the church triumphant. That, of course, is the glad fruition of faith, when one's membership on earth becomes permanent in the church of heaven. People leave by the gateway of changing membership. This is to be commended, when people, moving from one community to another, are loyal enough to transfer their membership as they do their most precious possessions. There is, however, a subtraction that is tragic, the loss of members through sheer indifference, neglect, worldliness, lack of pastoral oversight and friendly contact; these exact a dreadful toll of the church. They constitute a loss that can be stayed and overcome only by following the Pentecostal example of daily addition. It was a *daily* matter. The Church of Christ is not built up by spasmodic efforts, by occasional strenuous, nerve-racking campaigns. Every day, every minister going about his legitimate work of adding people to the church; unceasingly, followers of Christ keeping in mind the most important business of the church, addition; such work has the approval of the great Head of the church. Whether a pastor receives members into the church every Sunday or on stated occasions is not material; it is material that the pastor keep in mind every day his divinely ordained task, addition. Addition, not for the sake of pride, nor of rivalry, nor to make a big showing in the statistical report; but to add souls to the church. That is, to bring them to Christ. Through repeated seasons, by tireless activity, to bring into the church those whose prime motive is not social prestige, but salvation, is true Pentecostal addition.

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PRAYER

O Christ, great head of the church, we love thy church above every institution of earth. Yet how poorly have we shown this love. We have campaigned enthusiastically for membership increases in other organizations while thy church has languished. We pledge renewed loyalty to the church. We will seek to add people to the church, not for the glory of the church, but for the good of the people. We will bring them to thee, O Christ, and thine altars shall again be bright with the Pentecostal rejoicing of the saved. In thy name and for thy sake. Amen.

FORTY-SEVENTH DAY

PENTECOSTAL UNITY

Read Matthew 18. 15-20

They were all with one accord in one place.—*Acts 2. 1.*

THE point of emphasis here is not the one place, but the one accord. It is impossible to-day to get all who honor God's Spirit in one place; it is not impossible to bring them into one accord. That is, to bring them into unity. Unity is not uniformity. Church uniformity has been weighed in the balances and found wanting. As well argue that we all live in houses built after the same plan as that we all worship God after the same form. As well insist that we all trade at the same store, that we all dress exactly alike, and strive to walk and talk alike, as that we should pour our religious ideals and practices into the common mold of uniformity. We have to reckon with human nature. Human nature refuses to be imprisoned by uniformity. Human nature comes as a direct gift from God our Father. He is not the God of uniformity, but of beautiful and infinite variety. Every blade of grass with which he carpets the earth is different. Every dewdrop is unlike every other dewdrop. Every drop of rain that refreshes the ground in summer and every flake of snow that blankets the earth in winter is clothed with individuality. God loves unity, but not uniformity. Uniformity is of the outside, unity of the inside. Uniformity is mechanical, unity spiritual. Uniformity is of little importance, unity of prime importance. Pentecost perfectly pictures unity, the unity that in goodly measure we already possess, the accord we even now practice. With one accord we all worship the same God. With one accord we all take our authority from the same Book. With one accord we all sing the same hymns. With one accord we are all working for the same end, to make this a better world in which to live. With one accord we are all bound for the same place, "dust to dust, earth to earth," from which the spirit shall rise immortal.

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PRAYER

Our loving Father, Father of us all, "whate'er our name or sign," save us from a narrow faith. Give us the inclusive mind, as inclusive as thine own love. Thou who lovest the world, help us to love the world. Thou who seekest all mankind, help us to seek all mankind. Thou who seest beauty in every color of skin, help us to see good in thy people of every race. Thou who hearest the sincere prayers of thy disciples in every church, save us from the folly of thinking thou hearest only the prayers that go up from our altars. Lord, bestow upon us Pentecost, the Pentecost of one accord, the Pentecost of unity. Amen.

FORTY-EIGHTH DAY

PENTECOSTAL LOVE

Read Romans 5. 1-8

The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.—*Romans 5. 5.*

What would be your answer if you were asked the greatest need of mankind to-day? My reply would be, the love of God. This would be my answer not because I am a minister and am supposed to reply in this strain, but because I am a man and as a man I have felt the world's need, as a man I have been in the thick of the activity to supply that need. The love of God which comes into one's life with the advent of the Spirit of God has many interpretations. Pentecostal love means racial inclusiveness. Not begrudging tolerance, but generous brotherliness. The problem of racial antipathies will not be solved by race sectionalism, nor by proud aloofness to the situation. It will be solved only by Pentecostal love manifesting itself in friendly contacts, by brotherly attitudes, a proportional distribution of offices and honors, "in honor preferring one another." The only "native stock" worth boasting is the stock that traces its ancestry to the interracial love of God. The only aristocracy in which one may take just pride is the aristocracy of character. Character, by the test of Pentecostal love, is the same beneath a black skin or white; whether the tongue speaks the language of South America or North Africa. Pentecostal love interprets itself to us through the medium of intellectual liberality. Not the liberality of looseness, but the liberality of freedom. Not the freedom to think as one pleases, but the freedom to think correctly, humanely, helpfully, sympathetically, truthfully. The freedom that permits our brother to think while we are thinking; that does not stamp his thought as heresy because he does not think exactly as we do. It was of this freedom that Jesus made the deathless declaration, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Pentecostal love enters the minds as well as the hearts of men, and enters by the coming in of the Holy Spirit.

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PRAYER

Our loving Father, we thank thee for love. Thy name is love. Thou art love. Thy gracious Spirit sheds abroad in our hearts divine love. How greatly we need thy love! The world suffers for lack of love. Little children are thrust into the streets and forgotten for want of love. Homes are cold and uninviting, friends separated, business relations strained, nations discuss war instead of peace because the world has so little of thy love. Send thy Holy Spirit that Pentecostal love may descend upon us as showers upon the thirsty ground. Amen.

FORTY-NINTH DAY

PENTECOST ABIDES

Read John 15. 1-12

The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.—*Acts 2. 39.*

After all is said and done the best thing about Pentecost is not its coming, but its abiding. Pentecost is not a passing phase. It is a permanent experience. It is not like an oasis in the desert. It is a vast, limitless land, everywhere watered and fruit-bearing. It is not an isolated case of what once was. It is a noble illustration of what may ever be. Even as Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever," so Pentecost holds possibilities for all generations. Visiting the Louis the Fourteenth Chapel in Paris, since 1840 the resting place of the body of the great Napoleon, I was impressed with the splendor and immensity of the tomb. Standing by the balustrade, looking down upon the black sarcophagus containing the mortal remains of the once mighty man, I seemed to feel the tremor of the continent, "shaken by his tread." I could easily picture the devoted soldiers of the "little corporal" rallying to his return. I could imagine the sacrificial loyalty of the wounded soldier as he said to the surgeon, "Probe a little deeper and you will find the emperor." All this as I stood by the balustrade. Then I lifted my eyes and saw the altar, flooded with sunlight. How could that be, for it was a cloudy day! I noted the windows on either side of the altar. They were gold and yellow and blue. They were of such a tint that the light they admitted, even on the gloomiest day, gave the impression of the most brilliant sunshine. My eyes still lifted, I saw above the altar the focus of the flood of light, the figure of Christ on the cross. He was high over all. Unconsciously the builders had made him the dominant note in that massive memorial. As much as to say, "Napoleon is great, but Christ is greater. Commanders come and go, but Christ remains." So with Pentecost. It is not an occasion, nor occasional. It is a ceaseless activity, a constant power, available to all disciples of all generations. The promise is to our children, and to all that are afar off, of "every name and sign" and time.

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PRAYER

Gracious Father, all-loving and loving all, thou who art not partial to people, places or posterity, give us a new sense of thy boundless, providential care. Thou didst send thy Holy Spirit to thy disciples in the first century. Thou hast not withheld thy Spirit from thy followers in other centuries. Thou desirest to give to us, thy people to-day, thy Spirit's presence. We claim the promise, given us and our children, and return unfeigned thanks. In Jesus' name. Amen.

FIFTIETH DAY

PENTECOSTAL ASSURANCE

Read Revelation 22. 17-21

Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.—*1 John 3. 24.*

To know, to have the sense of reality, is one of the privileges of Pentecost. "Why is it," asked the Archbishop of Canterbury, "that you actors on the stage can speak of things imaginary and affect your audience as if they were real, while we of the church speak of things that are real and they affect the congregation as if they were imaginary?" To which Batterson the actor replied, "My Lord Bishop, the reason is very plain; we actors on the stage speak of things imaginary as if they were real, while you of the pulpit speak of things real as if they were imaginary." The Holy Spirit is a reality. We may know. Assurance comes "by the Spirit which he hath given us." The trouble is we play with these mighty realities of the supernatural world. Do not be afraid of the qualities of the spiritual realm. You know what money is, though you may have little of it. You handle it, you are acquainted with its reality. You know what it will do. You are assured of the house whose roof and walls protect you, of the clothes you wear, of the tools with which you work. You may have the joy of an equal assurance of the Holy Spirit. "For we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." O preacher, ascend your pulpit steps with the assurance of the reality of God's Spirit. Do not be hesitant. Never be apologetic. You are the prophet of God, whose speech has the ring of an authority that comes only with assurance. O Christian, walk out into your daily life with the certainty that you do not walk alone. Someone goes with you, someone is within you. This is the stalwart assurance of every child of God, that "he abideth in you, by the Spirit which he hath given you."

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PRAYER

My Father and my God, forgive my faintheartedness. I have felt my way when I should have plunged boldly ahead. I have doubted when I should have believed; questioned when I should have asserted; been cowardly when I should have been brave. I have spoken in whispers when I should have thundered with a mighty voice; qualified my message when my pulpit should have given forth "no uncertain sound." My compass has wavered when it should have been steady. Help me henceforth to be a preacher, not a mere reciter; a prophet, not a declaimer; giving to thy people the Pentecostal assurance that is their rightful heritage. Amen.

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